


November 2020

Feasting on Words: What University Students Learn When They Study Food Writing and Food Media

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Feasting on Words: What University Students Learn When They Study Food Writing
and Food Media

by

Janet K. Keeler

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
with a concentration in Educational Innovation
Department of Teaching and Learning
College of Education
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Date of Approval:
November 2, 2020

Keywords: curriculum, Eisner, journalism, connoisseurship, evaluation

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Abstract

The use of food in college curriculum is unique in its ability to create lasting impact because of the keen interest millennial and Generation Z students have in what they eat and drink. Studying media with food at its core is an underutilized mechanism to show how food intersects with the lives of all people thus encouraging students to look beyond their own experiences to consider the wider society. A program evaluation of 10 semesters of food writing and food media courses at a Florida public university reveals the ways in which students make deeper connections to culture and current events, plus gain insight into this genre of journalism. The instructor and developer of the curriculum, and the author of this study, is a retired journalist with a food writing specialty. Situated in Eisner's educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology, the study discovers the ways that her expertise largely facilitates but occasionally hinders learning. It is not only the students who experience untaught lessons, but an open-minded professor too.

Chapter One: Introduction

In a guest lecture on food and culture, I showed students a photograph of a French croissant next to a picture of a plate of Mexican mole. I asked, “Which is the more complex food?” Nearly every student said the croissant. After some discussion, they concluded that the croissant was more refined mostly because it was French and they believe French cuisine is the most sophisticated and storied in the world. Plus, the croissant was prettier than the sludgy brown mixture pooled on a plate. In their estimation, Mexican food is mostly cheap offerings often associated with a late-night run through the Taco Bell drive-through.

Neither the croissant nor the mole are fast foods. Each will take the better part of two days to prepare. The croissant dough rises and rests overnight; the mole sauce simmers on the stove then rests for hours to develop full and deep flavor.

A croissant has seven ingredients: water, flour, milk, yeast, sugar, butter and salt (Hamelman, 2009). The flaky pastry requires patience and a fair amount of baking acumen even though no special equipment is needed and a standard home oven suits the task just fine. The history of the croissant is not as straightforward as its taste. Fiegl (2015) sums up food historian beliefs that the croissant is not even a French invention and is a descendent of the crescent-shaped kipfel of Austria. As late as the 1800s, the French thought of the croissant as foreign food (Fiegl, 2015).

Traditional Oaxacan mole includes nearly 25 ingredients, among them an mélange of hot chilies plus cinnamon, cloves, cumin, oregano, sesame seeds, walnuts, pecans, pumpkin seeds, chocolate, raisins, almonds, and more (Kennedy, 2010). It requires multiple pieces of equipment

among them an electric food processor in an American kitchen or the more labor-intensive and low-tech molcajete in Mexico. Other needed equipment includes a Dutch oven, frying pan, stock and saucepots, gloves to protect hands and eyes from the searing pain of the hot pepper seeds, and sharp knives. Mole sauce pre-dates Spain's invasion of Mexico 500 years ago. The unsweetened, deeply flavored chocolate comes courtesy of the Mayans and Aztecs who thought it was sacred. There is history in that pot about the migration of people and food, and conflict and victory. The croissant has a history that begins during the Ottoman Turk siege of Vienna in 1683 and not in a romantic Parisian boulangerie as one might expect (Monaco, 2014).

My point in sharing the story and photos was not to inspire the students to head for the kitchen to cook, but rather to get to the questions: Who gets to tell whose story? And whose story gets told? In the case of French vs. Mexican cuisine, the answer is easy. French cuisine has had better public relations. The story of French food has been written about endlessly, including by Auguste Escoffier who updated and then chronicled French culinary methods in the early 20th century. Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's "Tell me what you eat and I will tell you who you are" words are emblazoned on T-shirts and posters nearly 200 years after he wrote them. French writer Marcel Proust's "Madeleine moment" is a beloved literary illustration of how food and memory connect. The story of Mexican cuisine is largely unwritten and the current leading authority is 97-year-old Diana Kennedy, a British author and cooking teacher who has lived in Mexico for more than 60 years. She has written a dozen cookbooks about Mexican cuisine and won many awards for her efforts. (Her American counterpart is Rick Bayless, a Chicago chef, restaurateur and cookbook author whose career and empire is built on his mastery of Mexican cuisine.) Scattergood (2018) writes that Kennedy is widely praised as telling an authentic and respectful story of the cuisine. Many chefs make pilgrimages to Kennedy's home to absorb what

she knows about Mexican cooking, mostly gleaned with an anthropologist's fervor (Krauklauer, 2012). Respect aside, Kennedy is not Mexican or even Latina or Hispanic.

Through that brief guest lecture for a Science and Culture course, the students left with more knowledge about the complexities of Mexican cuisine and a little history about French food. My intention was that they gained cursory understanding that what they know is largely shaped by the storytellers that got to tell the story because of their power (politics, economics and race). Those storytellers, most often White and northern European, have shaped our beliefs about these cultures through their points of view (Satia, 2018). Satia maintains that historians, and I would extend this to curriculum developers, must assert their expertise to ward against monopolistic claims so that students and the public have a more complete understanding of the world. That food is integral to the world's stories is obvious. Today, many of those food storytellers are journalists writing not only in traditional newspapers and magazines, but also on Internet-only publications websites such as Civil Eats, Serious Eats, Southern Foodways Alliance, and Roads & Kingdoms.

For this class lecture, I went on to explore with the students the labels Southern food vs. soul food as an introduction to food appropriation, a concept that confuses and irritates many of my food writing students and did so in this classroom. Food appropriation is a subset of cultural appropriation, and is used to describe the economic gain by a dominant culture that colonizes food from another country or ethnic group. It is a sophisticated concept more simply exemplified by the hot water celebrity chef Andrew Zimmern landed in when he said in 2019 that his restaurant Lucky Cricket would be a vast improvement from the sketchy "restaurants masquerading as Chinese food that are in the Midwest" (Cheung, 2019, para. 10). Zimmern is not of Chinese descent as are most of the owners of the restaurants he was referring to, and he

was accused of being patronizing, plus appropriating a food culture for economic gain. He issued an apology.

Students ask “Why can’t anyone who wants to make a burrito make a burrito?” They change their tune, at least a little, when I ask them to think about it in a less personal way. Who gets to make money from making the burrito? That led to a discussion about the lending of money and how White applicants are more successful procuring business loans than people of color (Fairlie & Robb, 2010). We also talked about why they know Julia Child but not Edna Lewis, contemporaries in the culinary world and equally groundbreaking in their achievements. Child was White, Lewis was Black. Child got her first TV cooking show in 1964, a year during which the Civil Rights Movement marched across the South and Black people were beaten and jailed for their part in the protests. Even though Sammy Davis Jr. had a regular spot on ’60s TV most African-Americans stayed “in their place” writes Bawer (2004). That meant they had no place at all in popular media. Lewis was a Black female chef and the granddaughter of an emancipated slave. Child, born into a wealthy Southern California family, taught American home cooks the art of French cooking in part by admonishing them to eschew inferior ingredients and what would soon be known as fast food (LeBesco & Naccarato, 2008). (Some might consider Child’s success food appropriation, too. She got famous and wealthy cooking someone else’s cuisine.) Lewis is credited with redefining Southern cooking through her Harlem restaurant and the many cookbooks she wrote. Their stories, told side by side, are intertwined with the history of civil rights and the women’s movement. One woman is more widely known because of the opportunities provided and coverage in popular media.

There was much more to teach about foodways, the term used to describe the ways food intersects with tradition, culture and history, but a 75-minute lecture was hardly enough time.

This experience is typical of the ways in which food is considered in university curriculum despite its ability to deepen understanding of diversity and as a potential pathway to cultural competence. Providing students with an opportunity to write about food and to study food writing also allows them to improve their writing skills and hone storytelling abilities that can be transferred to other types of assignments, and ultimately to communication careers. In essence, the study of food through food writing and food media has transformative qualities.

The lack of exposure to other cultures leads students to accept stereotypes and to think of people not like them as the “other.” Anderson and Rose (2016) write “a hallmark feature of othering is to make broad-brush statements about other cultures with little sensitivity to or awareness of the profound differences that can exist among different groups of people within, for instance, the same national borders” (p. 19).

Food, specifically food writing, food journalism and food media, is largely unexplored as a tool to develop cultural competence, improve communication skills and study the scope of journalism at the university level. The subject of food, and by extension food media, is virtually nowhere in higher education curricula except in anthropology, agriculture and nutrition programs despite its benefits in preparing students to function in multicultural environments post graduation. By excluding or ignoring the topic for serious study, educators miss an opportunity to connect with students in familiar, obvious and meaningful ways and to deepen their funds of knowledge.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate what students learn in the food writing and food media courses that I teach at a Florida public university. I evaluated 10 semesters of courses, including 800 documents from 216 students. There were 15 to 29 students enrolled in

each class. Among the evaluated documents were course-end assessments of the classes plus written assignments and discussion prompt responses on journalistic articles with food as their central theme. I considered reflective writing on assigned memoirs, including Michael Twitty's *The Cooking Gene: A Journey Through African-American Culinary History in the Old South*, Jennifer 8. Lee's *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles*, and Kwame Onwuachi's *Notes from a Young Black Chef*.

Study Questions

The assessment of this data was driven by my study questions:

1. What is the intended curriculum in post secondary food writing and food media courses?
2. What do students experience from the enacted curriculum in these courses?
3. What are the untaught lessons of the curriculum for students?

The intended curriculum is the framework for what is developed by the instructor (in this case me). Because these are mass communication special topics elective courses, there are no state of Florida guidelines for outcomes. In academic assessment, intended curriculum is often dictated from governmental agencies. Not so in the case of these classes nor this study. I had the autonomy to develop the coursework and learning outcomes. The courses included in this study were online (save for one semester) so the assessed data that drove the results of the study are written work. I had no occasion to observe students in person. Rather than hamper the study, I believe it was the correct approach because any observation now would be relying on my recollection. Since this study was conducted after the courses had been taught, I did not have written reflective notes about what went on in class. Relying on the students' written work as the

primary data for assessment increased the trustworthiness of the study. Their words were solid indicators.

In subsequent chapters, I reveal more about my thought process in curriculum development, addressing the ways in which my professional experience as a journalist and food writer shaped the courses including how readings, videos, podcasts and other media were selected. Also examined were the ways in which my return to school to obtain a doctoral degree influenced curriculum. For the purpose of my research questions, the assigned media is the intended curriculum. I did not separate the assigned media into its own research question. However, at this point it is imperative to address the definition of the enacted curriculum, for it is here that much of the weight of the study rests. Porter and Smithson (2001) write that learning occurs when students engage with the curriculum. This is the enaction of the curriculum and “arguably the single most important feature of any curriculum indicator system” (Porter & Smithson, 2001, p. 2). Finally, I looked for evidence of “untaught lessons” as outlined by Jackson (1992). The untaught lessons are easily overlooked in a casual assessment of how a semester’s courses went when I am often looking at grades and if the students appeared to grasp some of the finer nuances of meaning in food journalism. Untaught lessons likely come about as students synthesize class material into their daily lives. Here, they are able to see relevance in ways not outlined on a syllabus. These lessons can be highly individualized. For example, in the food podcasting class, students were required to start their own podcast and record three episodes. One student chose to focus her podcast on Jewish food traditions and to include her parents as co-hosts. It was one of the best in the class, benefitting from her parents’ deep bench of knowledge about the cultural and historic significance of Jewish holiday food. Plus, they were avid home cooks. The conversation between all three was engaging. Several weeks after the class

ended, the student wrote a thank you note saying that she became closer to her parents through the experience, and was more connected with her faith. She did not know when she started the podcast how eloquently her parents could speak on their religion and the food that is central to it.

I came to this study wearing several hats: as a university instructor specializing in beginning journalism and food writing, food media and food photography courses; as the curriculum developer of these classes and as a veteran journalist and food writer. I was the longtime food editor at a major American newspaper and continue to write about the topic for online publications and am a contributor to a public radio food podcast. Before I became a food writer/editor, I was a news reporter, news copy editor, features editor, and features copy desk supervisor, among other roles. Currently, I coordinate the only university graduate food writing and photography certificate program in the country, and have taught food writing/food media courses since 2013. Anecdotally, I knew that students think differently about the topic of food and food writing after taking the courses. They are surprised at the breadth of the genre thinking it is largely about recipes and cookbooks. However, I had never evaluated the course work qualitatively using coding techniques to categorize then analyze student experiences. I was not so interested in their grades, which of course are a university requirement, because they wouldn't tell me much about what students actually took away from the courses as far as cultural outlook or even a changed view of what is considered journalism.

In addition, my goals as a curriculum developer were to expose students to the wide variety of food writing and multimedia food journalism and encourage them to stretch in their own ways of writing about food, both in topic and vocabulary. I did not initially conceive of the courses as cultural studies but they have metamorphosed into that. I reshaped some of the curriculum to address culture because it seemed to be an unplanned experience that students

enjoyed and about which they engaged in lively discussion. This cursory assessment jibes with Dewey's ideas (1938) of "collateral learning." The cultural lesson was what the students had seemingly been learning aside from my stated goals. This study took me on a journey to find out what else they took away and that the information might be useful to the wider academy. Hall (2016) defines cultural studies as the exploration of "common forms of experiences and shared definitions by which a community lives" (p. 32). In essence, he writes, cultural studies look at the lives we live because of the circumstance we were born into. And so it makes sense to consider the study of migrant farmworkers and their contribution to the American diet as cultural studies via food journalism.

The significance of this evaluation is its ability to boost the study of food writing and foodways into a more serious realm and beyond the subjects of anthropology, nutrition and agriculture. Bruner asks, "How do we tailor fundamental knowledge to the interests and capacities of children?" (1960, p. 22). I maintain that his question can extend to college students who are barely out of childhood when they enter university directly from high school. Their interests are not buried once they leave the nest so university curriculums should take into account their interests and fundamental knowledge as a way to reach and resonate. In part, this study answered Bruner's question. The study of food and foodways has the capacity, as Bruner suggests, to be "simultaneously exciting, correct, and rewardingly comprehensible" (1960, p. 22). My study adds to the body of knowledge of the ways in which university curriculum can connect with students in meaningful ways. It reveals the ways that student thinking about culture and journalism is challenged and informed when they study food writing and food media.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

College students in the 21st century are obsessed with food, not unlike their parents were with collecting rock ‘n’ roll albums or their parents’ parents might have been with playing golf and bridge. There may be no better place to understand the depth of this contemporary love affair than by perusing the offerings from Spoon University, a global digital publication that features the writing of college foodies. There are more than 250 chapters of Spoon University at institutions as widespread as Harvard (Massachusetts) and Truman State (Missouri) plus Christ University in Bangalore, India; University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, and Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan.

The headlines on the stories from the chapter sites tell the tale of a food-connected culture: “5 Things You Didn’t Know about the Barista Experience” (University of California, Berkeley); “7 Food Trends the Gilmore Girls Would Totally Hate” (Brandeis University), and “7 Clever Ways to Use Stale Tortilla Chips” (University of Central Florida). There are thousands more stories about sustainability warriors, clever dorm cooks, dedicated vegans and vegetarians, dumped lovers soothed by ice cream, and students looking for culinary magic to keep them awake during late-night cramming. Trader Joe’s, the specialty chain market that sells food with a side of cool, is a frequent topic of Spoon articles. A Google search of “Spoon University” and “Trader Joe’s” returns nearly 22,000 hits with a multitude of social media tags and stories ranging from rankings of products, including cookies and frozen food, to stories about surviving a week solely on Trader Joe’s offerings to loving missives about vegan meals ready in a snap. Spoon University is driving content on social media platforms too, especially Instagram and

Pinterest. There is now a Spoon University high school platform and lists exist there too: “7 Kinds of Reactions When I Told People I was Vegan” is by a writer named Kate Fraser though her high school is unnamed.

The obsession with food is driven by several factors (Hartman, 2016). Younger millennials (Generation Y), born in the mid 80s to the mid/late 90s, and Generation Z, born after that, are digitally connected and have grown up around lots of information about food (Turow, 2018; Lazarevic, 2012). Turow asserts that the narcissistic tendencies of social media are also making the sharing of food information ubiquitous and easy.

Millennials have been raised in a restaurant and take-out culture. Even for their parents, cooking at home is a hobby more than a necessity, and car services (Uber Eats and Bite Squad for example) deliver ready-to-eat meals to their homes. Users put dinner in motion from apps on their cellphones. The obsession is so strong that millennials are redefining the food industry (Benson, 2018). The generation endlessly criticized for its willingness to spend a quarter of its money on food does not see their actions as frivolous. Rather, Benson (2018) writes that the focus on food is a response and protest of the industrialized agriculture industry that has damaged the environment and denigrated food quality. Avocado toast has become a symbol of millennial folly but their perspective is that it is an “accessible, affordable, versatile, DIY meal that checks multiple nutritional boxes” (Benson, 2018, p. 26).

The millennial desire for businesses to tell a story and give them a say in how their food is constructed (think Chipotle) has driven success and hastened failure (Reiley, 2014). The quiet, white tablecloth restaurant is nearly dead in America, given way to loud restaurants designed with hard surfaces from top to bottom that amplify sound rather than muffle it. Patrons must scream to be heard. That’s okay. Millennials want high food quality with global flavors *and*

experience (Taylor et al., 2018). Lazarevic (2012) writes that they are also more likely to snub the social mores of previous generations and that would explain why the hushed tones of the romantic dinner isn't of much interest to them. There are about 80 million millennials in the U.S. (compared to 72 million baby boomers) and Turow (2015) writes that about half of them consider themselves foodies, a label that describes people for whom food is a top priority. The number of millennials will grow as immigrants in that age group come into the country (Fry, 2018).

Chronicling every daily move, no matter how mundane, is simple as nearly everyone carries a smartphone with computer and camera capabilities. Eating is a multi-times-a-day occurrence so it naturally lends itself to documentation and immediate social media sharing. In mid-September 2020, the hashtag #foodphoto had appeared in 8.3 million posts on the photo sharing social media site Instagram.

Nestle and McIntosh (2010) write that the explosion of non-fiction food books, including memoir, aid in the heightened interest. They encourage a reconsideration of the common intellectual base of knowledge to include more study of food. They suggest this in part because of “how journalists and writers have used the themes of food studies for advocacy purposes” (Nestle & McIntosh, 2010, p. 161). Food studies is not the study of the preparation of food, which is the purview of culinary programs, but rather the “study of the relationships between food and the human experience” (Miller & Deutsch, 2009, p. 3). For example, culinary historian Michael Twitty approaches the subject of food as a way to trace his roots from the Africa to the American South, and to make sense of the vast melting pot of cultures and world heritages that make up that region of the United States. The legacy of slavery figures prominently into his worldview and to his personal story (Twitty, 2017). The Southern table laden with delectable

food is the place where he believes those complicated and painful stories are told and memory is constructed. “We just know that somehow the table aches from the weight of so much ... that we prop it up with our knees and excuses to keep it from falling” (Twitty, 2017, xii). Chef and author Edward Lee uses the American South as his canvas too, but the paint comes from his South Korean heritage and his keen eye as an observer of the many cultures coming together south of the Mason Dixon line. “The intersection of food and culture happens in strange and beautiful ways” (Lee, 2014, p. 5).

To Nestle and McIntosh’s point, the genre of food writing, in books, on the Internet and journalistically, continues to grow in number and seriousness. The James Beard Foundation awards annual honors for works in this category. The James Beard awards are often called the Oscars of the food world with awards bestowed on chefs, restaurateurs, cookbook authors, journalists, podcasters and TV personalities. The award ceremonies were canceled due to the global pandemic in 2020 and the chef/restaurant award program itself was paused as racial inequities came to light at publications and restaurants (Zhang, 2020). The Associated Press won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in the Public Service category for its series exposing that people were being enslaved, some even held in cages, in Southeast Asia as part of the shrimp harvesting industry. The shrimp harvested this way were traced to supermarkets across the United States. The study of food’s role in social movements through food writing is valid (Turshen, 2017). The next year, Laura Reiley, the then food critic of the *Tampa Bay Times* (Fla.), was a finalist in the criticism category of the Pulitzer Prizes for a series she wrote about how some restaurateurs in the Tampa Bay area were duping diners with misrepresentations on their menus about the origin of ingredients (Reiley, 2016). The title of the series was Farm to Fable. Reiley left the *Tampa*

Bay Times in 2019 to join the business staff of the *Washington Post*, where she is the newspaper's first "business of food" reporter.

But what is food writing? Food historian and Australian university professor Barbara Santich defines it as writing about people's "experiences of food in all its guises and contexts" (Green, n.d., para. 2). Legendary food writer M.F.K. Fisher philosophized that when she wrote of hunger it was not always about the grumble in the stomach but more likely the longing in the heart and mind (Green, n.d.). Author Mark Kurlansky takes Fisher's idea and expounds, "It is about memory and tradition and, at times, even about sex" (2002, p. 1). I am not convinced their ideas get us to a definitive definition but these points of view certainly aid in laying out the cultural and human significance. Ruth Reichl, late of the *New York Times* and late of the late *Gourmet* magazine, asserts that food writing is simply writing about "science or history or politics. People are interested in food, and it's a great vehicle for a writer. And it seems to me that it is a wasted opportunity to not bring up moral questions" (Ho, 2019, para. 20). She adds that everyone is interested in food so the food writer has a built-in audience.

Some writers who write about food prefer to be called food journalists. Barry Estabrook's *Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit* (2012) chronicled the tomato industry gone awry in Florida and his *Pig Tales: An Omnivore's Guide to Sustainable Meat* (2016) revealed ugly truths about animal treatment. Estabrook is a journalist whose writing is rooted in the tenets of that profession. So too is Michael Pollen, professor of science and environmental journalism at University of California, Berkeley and author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* and *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto* which includes the oft-quoted line "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants" (Pollan, 2008, p. 3).

Food journalism is intertwined with feminism and has reached heights of respect that the early female food editors could only have dreamed about. Voss (2014) writes that food journalism became a stalwart feature in newspapers after World War II and became more prominent in the 1960s as consumer advocacy grew. Until then, many food journalists were basically public megaphones for food manufacturers, who provided recipes for publication on “women’s pages.” Most food writers were women and Voss notes that they did not always have journalism training. That is rarely the case today, where it is not uncommon for food critics to have both culinary training and a college degree in journalism, political science or English. Restaurant reviewing also came into existence around this time but as mostly the purview of men. In the mid 1970s, the Association of Food Journalists was formed to recognize this genre of journalism and to provide a community for the exchange of ideas and the creation and adoption of ethical guidelines (Association of Food, n.d.). AFJ ethical guidelines for food critics include topics such as anonymity, fact checking, conflict of interest, payment, use of social media, ratings and the suggested waiting period before a new restaurant should be reviewed (one month). In mid-2020, AFJ announced that it would disband by the end of the year mostly because its dwindling newspaper membership was causing revenues to fall (Sugar, 2020).

It is no small task to satisfactorily define a genre that includes Toni Tipton-Martin’s *The Jemima Code* (2015), comedian Jim Gaffigan’s *Food: A Love Story* (2014) and Eric Schlosser’s *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (2001). Lump these books with dozens more from similar subsets plus add to that the work in newspapers and magazines and on Internet sites that features restaurant reviews plus tips and recipes for every holiday on the calendar. Even Wikipedia is at an uncharacteristic loss for words on this: “food writing is a type of writing that focuses on food and includes works by food critics and food historians” (“Food

Writing,” 2020). That definition is woefully inadequate because it leaves out writers whose work focuses on food but intersects with economics, health, politics, culture and science. Food journalism will suffice for some but not all. While the definition doesn’t come simply, the conviction does. Ruhlman (2012) writes that “telling stories about food and cooking is not only natural, it’s necessary for our survival” (para.13). He follows up by noting he can go weeks without watching a movie or the need to understand quantum physics, but not so food. (Scientists might buy the movie line but not so the quantum physics reference. This branch of science is credited with allowing the heating element in the toaster to glow red and toast the bread (Orzel, 2016). Still, the point is well taken. Food is a necessity.)

There are thousands of English language food blogs on the Internet spouting varying quality of writing from the good to the bad to the ugly. Citizen restaurant reviewers give thumbs up and thumbs way down on sites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, Chowhound and OpenTable. The website Goodreads.com lists hundreds of food books from genre subsets such as memoir, travel, cookbook, fiction and non-fiction. The site aggregates 177 romance novels with food themes (lots of love stories seem to take place in bakeries) and 130 books in the “culinary goddess” category.

We have always known that food is everywhere, now so is food media.

Waxman (2008) writes that of these subsets of the food-writing genre, memoir has become increasingly popular since Reichl’s *Tender at the Bone* was published in 1998. Reichl became a bestselling book author with her tale of growing up with of a dysfunctional mother who might have been the worst cook in New York. *Tender at the Bone* birthed the modern food memoir movement. Notable before her was M.F.K Fisher, author *The Gastronomical Me* (1943) for one. Some might even put Marcel Proust’s seven volume *Remembrances of Things Past*,

written between 1913 and 1927, in that category because of his retelling of the moment that he was involuntarily transported to his childhood all because of a bite of Madeleine cookie.

Waxman (2008) makes a case for food memoirs to take a bigger role in literature classes because of their ability to connect with readers, evoking their own feelings about family heritage and culture. “The philosophical, psychological and cultural dimensions of culinary memoirs ... make them good material for the literature classroom” (2008, p. 365). Food memoirs borrow from the tenets of food studies because they show that “cooking and eating may define group and general identities, celebrate social cohesion and perform rituals of cultural belonging” (Dorin et al., 2003, p. 2). It has already been stated that food can be used in the classroom to connect with students because, well, we all eat. Food writing is an extension of that and provides teachers with material that they could not devise on their own. All instructors rely on books and Bloom (2008) writes that food, and by association food writing, is an intrinsically significant subject. In *The Gastronomical Me*, Fisher (1943) writes that the three basic needs — food, love and security — are for her intertwined and are as necessary as air for survival. Bloom (2008) asserts that Fisher exemplifies the essence of good food writing and it is likely that a college course study of her memoir will lead students to these same connections. The feelings are universal and a food writer led us there. Another vote for Waxman’s campaign to utilize food memoir more in the classroom.

Rice (2017) writes that the interest in food and food writing is so vast that it is impossible to quantify. He notes, like Waxman, the explosion of food memoir but expands the discussion to include works, and the need for more, that dig deeper to unveil the power relationship between people and consumption. In my food writing classes, I put this type of writing into a category that I label “food writing as activism.” Writers who decode power structures are in pursuit of

“authentic academic writing” (Rice, 2017, p. 124). And what better place to study academic writing than in a college classroom?

And yet, the subject of food gets short shrift.

The topic of food fueled by technology and popular media is on the minds of university students but not necessarily on their course syllabuses. Curriculum developers could be using food as a tool to connect with students in meaningful ways and to deepen their understanding of food beyond the superficial lists they love so much. Cooper (2012) writes that there is a potential pathway to cultural understanding by using food in the classroom. Bloom (2008) writes that elective food writing courses are proliferating at universities around the country much like zucchini in the August garden but that they are not given their due in textbooks or academic articles. The topic deserves to be the intellectual “focal point of the meal” (Bloom, 2008, p. 358) and not simply served as a side dish. The study of food and culture has not found its way into required general education curriculum but when it does, criticism can follow (Leef, 2013). Nestle and McIntosh (2010) note that food studies programs have taken off like a rocket with 15 American universities offering degrees in this field of study but the movement may have slowed since then despite increased interest among students. Food studies programs usually encompass topics such as sustainability, nutrition, public and health policy, and culture. Nestle and McIntosh (2010) laud the study of food as not only an academic pursuit but as a means to change society because its tentacles spread into various areas including historical, cultural, behavioral, biological and socio-economical. However, a Google search of U.S. food studies programs reveals that the 15 programs Nestle and McIntosh noted in 2010 has grown to just 24 in 2019. Degrees range from certificates to minors to doctorates. Only seven universities offer bachelor’s degrees in food studies (Association for the Study, 2017). Jobs for graduates with food studies

degrees include careers in food-safety reform, food business management, equity and climate change endeavors, community food bank management, public policy, creative and food writing, among others (Spiegel, 2012).

The Value of Studying Food

The study of food reveals to students how much we are alike while still being able to recognize and celebrate cultural differences. Chris Ying edited a collection of essays for *You and I Eat the Same* that highlights this notion through a global literary tour of food writing. One example is how cooking with fire has transformed diets worldwide. This essay by Arielle Johnson takes an historic look at the way heat elevated food preparation and then recognizes the diverse ways that is done around the world. Culture comes into the play though the element of transformation is the same. “It’s a wonder to behold all the ways humans have refined and manipulated fire ... we’re all performing the same process our ancestors used millions of years ago: converting carbon and oxygen into heat” (Johnson, 2018, p. 69). I used this book in my food writing class one semester not to homogenize experiences but to illustrate that even diverse cultures have things in common.

Another essay in *You and I Eat the Same* shows how food can create pathways for immigration and assimilation by the sharing of experiences, recipes and ingredients. The city of San Francisco has an incubator kitchen in the largely Hispanic Mission District that assists low-income clients in starting food businesses, focusing on female immigrants (Ying, 2018). *You and I Eat the Same* was awarded first place in the “Food Matters” category by the International Association of Culinary Professionals at their annual media awards in 2019. While the content of the essays is informative, it is the genre of book that was most germane to this study: Food writing. Food writing is culture writing (Fusté-Forné & Masip, 2018). These authors encourage

the study of food writing, especially in newspapers in which the topic serves as a social driver and not simply “women’s pages” fodder. Food should be considered as a cultural field of study much like art and movies (Ray, 2007). Incorporating food into university language courses can excite students at every level of ability because they are engaging through a “universal medium” (Anderson & Rose, 2016). The authors write that part of learning another language is to develop intercultural competence and food can be a facilitator. Talking about the food of another country in that country’s language can foster understanding and might also make a connection with a future traveler. In this case, the study of language may have relevance that may not come with rote memorization.

Food “seems to ‘break the ice,’ encouraging participation from even the most reticent students since everyone can be considered an authority on their own foodways” (Long, 2001, p. 254). Foodways is the term used to describe the ways food intersects with tradition, culture and history. Social studies curriculum can benefit from a dynamic food-centric curriculum (Cooper, 2012). The desire for food and the human necessity for nourishment are universal. How the food comes to our plates is where the difference resides. Politics, culture, economics and geography come into play. We can discuss this over an ear of corn (the largest cash crop in the U.S.) or a big slice of watermelon (a symbol of freedom to newly emancipated slaves that has somehow devolved into a racist trope) (Black, 2014).

The use of food in the classroom has been gimmicky and superficial (Cooper, 2012). For example, eating tacos on Cinco de Mayo to celebrate Mexican culture is common in classrooms across the United States. However, there is little education value without discussion about the cultural origins of the food and why Cinco de Mayo is such a big holiday in the U.S. (Cabrero & Lucero, 2018). A creative teacher could deconstruct the taco to include a discussion of the

history and migration of the ingredients and their economic power, origins of the preparation techniques, and the evolution of the Mexican silver miners' working lunch to American fast food staple (Friesen, 2012). Pioneering scholar James Banks (1981) might counter that rationale, saying it does not go far enough to promote and teach multiculturalism. He would argue that the taco was selected by mainstream criteria thus perpetuating a non-inclusive power structure. His four approaches for integration of multicultural content (contributions, additive, transformation and social action), while each having advantages and disadvantages, provide more ideas for substantive curriculum development. For example, in the transformation category, students in a university world cultures course could devise a menu based on what might have been eaten in Puebla, Mexico, around the time of the 1862 Battle of Puebla. Cinco de Mayo celebrates the Mexican victory over the French at this battle. Complex chicken mole, with its more than 20 ingredients, is a more likely dish for commemoration than the taco, which is not indigenous to the state of Puebla. In the social action category, students might study the conditions under which Mexican farmworkers toil. Depending on the proximity to fields, a field trip could be planned. In Florida, a visit by a representative from the Farmworkers Association of Florida could be instructive in deepening cultural understanding and lending humanity to the story of the ingredients commonly found in the Mexican food eaten in the United States.

Hsu (2016) notes that many immigrant groups gain acceptance, in part, through the popularization of the food that comes from their countries, despite how misinterpreted they might be. The most un-Chinese dish served in American Chinese restaurants is chop suey, an American invention. A study of this dish tells the tale of immigration, assimilation and discrimination. Hsu maintains that the sacrifices of immigrant laborers are often ignored in academic study and that food can indeed be used to bridge the popular and the political. "The

high entertainment value of exotic ethnic foods and tourist businesses can seduce consumers and food experts alike, obscuring the unequal power structures bound up in their operations and complicated and deepened through their intersection with racial projects and regimes of immigration control” (Hsu, 2015, p. 685).

Psilaki (2012) explains how she uses different types of bread in her classes as a way for students to experience the food of the “other” and to show the complexity of human behavior and experience. Eating the food of the “other” though has in some cases become a crutch or a way for educators to check off the multicultural box on curriculum requirements. The phrase “eating the other multiculturalism” is used by Alenuma-Nimoh (2016) to describe the ways that teachers use cultural festivals to showcase diversity despite the danger of perpetuating stereotypes. Curriculum developers that represent the White dominant culture use this as fallback. We are back at the lamentable and sorry use of tacos on Cinco de Mayo as a way to honor Mexican heritage. Banks (1981) emphasizes the idea of educational equality in multicultural education. Part of his thinking is that to promote social transformation the curriculum needs to be profound and broad. The taco won’t do it. Alvarado (2018) goes so far as to say that the “around the world” potluck should be banished because of the superficial and one-dimensional view it perpetuates. The lack of exposure to other cultures leads students to accept stereotypes and to think of people not like them as the “other.” Anderson and Rose (2016) write “a hallmark feature of othering is to make broad-brush statements about other cultures with little sensitivity to or awareness of the profound differences that can exist among different groups of people within, for instance, the same national borders” (p. 19).

At the university level, constant evaluation of diversity agendas is needed and remains a challenge (Sanchez et al., 2018). The onslaught of rhetoric and initiatives do not always lead to

satisfactory results nor do they foster positive campus climates (Groggins & Ryan, 2013). The authors further state that the link is not consistently strong between a positive climate and enhanced organizational effectiveness. It appears that the best intentions to increase cultural competence lack the ability to connect meaningfully. The National Education Association (2020) defines cultural competence as “understanding your own culture, other’s culture, and the role of culture in education. Using student’s culture as a basis for learning, communicating high expectations, and reshaping curriculum to reflect student’s diversity leads to better educational outcomes” (para. 1).

Ladson-Billings (1994) defines culturally relevant teaching a “pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These cultural referents are not merely vehicles for bridging or explaining the dominant culture; they are aspects of the curriculum in their own right” (p. 20).

A teacher in the trenches might define cultural competence more simply as the ability to be open, accepting and understanding to people different from you.

Enyeart Smith et al. (2107) write that the path to cultural competence is a complex and nuanced process that must be “intentionally mediated and developed over time” (p. 26). Their survey of college students reveals the belief that diversity is not solely about race and ethnicity, but that sexual orientation, economics, learning abilities and physical and mental abilities should also be considered. It was also clear from the survey, which was conducted anonymously, that students felt they could not respond truthfully in all cases for fear of being politically incorrect. Anderson (2005) writes that foodways provide the perfect vehicle from which to delve into subjects of culture, including what is important to people. Food can also be a jumping off point

for critical conversations or a way to ease tensions. Unlike politics, food is “not often the subject of highly polarized and violent debate” (Anderson, 2005, p. 6). Anderson and Rose (2016) find that the study of food in university language classes fostered conversation but also bolstered the reason for studying language at all.

There has been much research published on the need and benefits for culturally responsive teaching (Irvine, 2003; Gay, 2000; Foster, 1993; Ford & Whiting, 2007.) “As scholars in both gifted and multicultural education, we support the belief that all educators must become culturally competent and endorse policies that are culturally responsive” (Ford & Whiting, 2007, p. 52). Ladson-Billings (1995) finds that “culturally relevant teachers utilize students’ culture as a vehicle for learning” (p. 161). It has been established that food = culture. But what is culture? It is nearly as hard to define as food writing and that definition is a moving target as culture evolves and changes (Mironenko & Sorokin, 2018). They do agree though that culture is delineated from other phenomena by the unifying idea that culture is generated by human activity.

Food can be used in school curricula to enhance cultural competence and to foster difficult and critical conversations about our differences. Smith-Maddox (1998) writes that cultural competence is a form of capital and is a socially valuable and desirable resource. Systematic exclusion of the teaching of culture results in citizens who do not understand each other (Smith-Maddox, 1998). This can create problems in the workplace for college graduates. As the population of the U.S. becomes increasingly diverse, the study of culture leading to competence becomes more necessary (Dashevsky, 2017). Contemporary workplaces are diverse in their makeup and employers are looking for candidates who can appreciate and accept differences (Leavitt et al., 2017). Robles (2012) devised a list of the top 10 most valuable skills

in the modern workplace based on a survey of 90 business executives. Though none of the skills specifically included the phrase “cultural competence” it would be difficult to imagine wide acceptance of diversity not being crucial in achieving courtesy, flexibility, interpersonal skills, team work and professionalism, five of the 10 skills. It was noted that educational development in these areas would lead to success in a “community of diversity” (Brown, 2018, p. 7).

Mpofu and Maphalala (2017) write that Socratic questioning develops critical thinking skills by using the six areas of inquiry: clarification; assumptions; reasons and evidence; viewpoints and perspectives; implications and consequences, and questions about questions. However, they note, that unless the students understand why they are being asked to think about these things, critical thinking skills do not develop. In essence, it’s an exercise in futility that can be seen as busy work. Snyder and Snyder (2008) write that teacher strategies in development of critical thinking need to be scrutinized and then developed (or redeveloped) to encourage teachers to embrace critical thinking activities as part of the curriculum and not in isolation. This is certainly the case of the classroom Cinco de Mayo taco party. It is an activity without educational purpose and certainly no opportunity for deeper discovery if the taco is merely served as lunch.

Topics in food communication can be heightened by using Socratic questioning, taking students to deeper understanding of culture and diversity. Take the humble tomato. The ripe, red fruit (yes, fruit) is layered in sandwiches and chopped for salads. But Socratic questioning can reveal details about global migration of food and people. How did the tomato, a native of the Andes region of South America, find its way to Italy where it is used ubiquitously and then to jars of salsa, the most popular condiment in the United States (Associated Press, 2011)? And salsa? Isn’t that Mexican? Yes, and there’s a long history in that bowl that encompasses Incan,

Mayan and Aztec civilizations along with Spanish exploration. Whether the tomato in the Cinco de Mayo taco was grown in the United States or Mexico, a Mexican likely picked it. Some 70 percent of farmworkers in the U.S. were born in Mexico (NCFH, 2018). There is much to unpack in parsing the tomato, including the human toll of what we eat, along with lessons about culture and diversity. However, this tactic requires buy-in from faculty who do not always have the training to teach multicultural education effectively (Lee et al., 2014). Irvine (2003) notes that this omission in training ignores the chance to address the “failure of some White teachers to recognize the nature of unearned White privilege and institutional racism (that) often leads to ‘victim blaming’ ” (p. 78). These teachers put the blame of underachieving students on the students themselves, their parents or caregivers, and the communities where they live. They do not question how their own worldviews might affect achievement. This can especially be a problem in the university setting where professors outside of education departments do not have much teaching training but are mostly subject specialists with research agendas (Patel, 2017).

Speaking of Curriculum

Food can be an effective vehicle for transformative teaching. Clark (1990) writes of an exemplary elementary classroom experience that utilized applesauce to teach about math, science and even culinary skills. But some of the unintended learning revolved around cooperation and self-discovery. The teacher learned that she was overly nervous about the children using knives. The activity also created a link between school and home, making the seemingly simple study of applesauce relevant. The lesson could have been extended to include the origins of apples and applesauce, and linguistic lessons about the apple centered on discussion of sayings such as “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree” and “apple of his eye.” Seminal educational theorist John Dewey believed that education must connect to the experience of the learner, and that experience

must be in the here and now. “We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future (Dewey, 1938, p. 49). This speaks to the relevance of experience for students and also of a genuine and authentic curriculum. Teaching technology for the future is folly because we don’t know how technology will develop. However, teaching that change is inevitable and that being open to new ways of doing things will keep a worker relevant. This is honest curriculum.

Dewey describes “collateral learning” as what is learned by students that is not necessarily intended by the teacher. This type of learning, what is outside of the spelling lesson for example, is what fosters “enduring attitudes” of “likes and dislikes” (Dewey, 1938, p. 48). He also encourages educators to think about how to connect students with the past by using the tools of the present. Adults often look back at their school days and wonder what became of the knowledge imparted to them in school (Dewey, 1938). He maintains that this loss of knowledge is the result of the subject matter being learned in isolation and, in today’s language, teachers were teaching to the test. What they taught enabled students to pass examinations but the information was not relevant or dynamic enough to be carried into adulthood.

To reshape the curriculum, it “should be integrated, interdisciplinary, meaningful and student-centered” (Hanover, 2016). “Cultural Responsiveness: From Theory to Practice,” a report prepared for Pinellas County (Fla.) Schools in 2016, addresses how to implement culturally relevant pedagogy into the schools in an effort to close the student achievement gap. Ways to do this, the report outlines, are to connect instructional material and curriculum to the culture and daily life of the students and to “value diversity in the classroom by learning about

students' histories and cultures" (Hanover, p. 11). The philosophy can carry into the university classroom.

The value of multiple perspectives is powerful. The challenge of "confronting different perspectives" can help "students clarify their own views" especially when talking about political issues (Hess & McAvoy, 2015, p. 53). Diversity in the classroom, and even in the community when it is missing among students, is an aid to teachers. A teacher who embraces different experiences can use it as a guide (Hess & McAvoy, 2015). What Bruner put forth in 1960 has come true today. He predicted that demand to teach science, technology and subjects that support those disciplines would increase. Indeed STEM (Science, technology, engineering and math) programs have proliferated in the last decade to meet the escalation of evolving technologies and the increase of lucrative jobs in those areas (Stebbins & Goris, 2019). The danger with this, Bruner predicted, was the alienation of good teachers in other fields and the resulting devaluation of the humanities. That has happened as the "soft skills," among them communication and storytelling, have taken a back seat to STEM courses in legislative agendas but they remain crucial skills for college graduates to get jobs (DeLong & Elbeck, 2018).

Making education, and by extension curricula, relevant should be one of the most important goals for educators. For curriculum to change humans, it must make a difference in the lives of learners after they leave the classroom. Tyler (2013) asserts that making those life-altering differences begins with the objectives of the curriculum.

The Tyler rationale provides insights on ways to develop curriculum thoughtfully and thoroughly. The four components of his blueprint of curriculum development – objectives, learning activities, organization of those activities and evaluation – streamlines a complicated process. His thinking, however, is not without criticism. Tyler's treatise does not take into

account that the starting objectives could change during the process of teaching, and it provides no guidance as to how to formulate the objectives (Fogarty, 1976). The latter criticism might be considered unfair as Tyler stated that there are “hundreds of studies that collected information useful to curriculum groups in selecting objectives” (Tyler, 2013, p. 4). Find the ones that suit your discipline, Tyler alludes; he focuses on broader notions.

Tyler believes that education changed people and that was one of its main purposes, but Kliebard (1970) wonders how then, if change is the goal, was education “any different from other means of changing behavior, such as, hypnosis, shock treatment, brainwashing, sensitivity training, indoctrination and torture” (Kliebard, 1970, p. 263). The curriculum-maker attempts to control the processes at the outset, but the outcomes are variable, determined by the learner and how the material is perceived (Tyler, 2013). I would agree that I do attempt to guide the experiences in my classes by selecting media for students to consume that gets them thinking (and improving) their own journalistic thinking and writing, while encouraging them to understand both how food journalists find, develop and present ideas. My study addressed the second part of Kliebard’s provocation as I focused on the question: What do students experience from the enacted curriculum?

Noddings (2009) encourages curriculum developers to engage in “aims-talk” to open the discussion about purpose. She wonders what are the aims in teaching algebra as an example of what we might accomplish when aims-talk is employed. Who benefits from learning algebra? How does this benefit the society? How does it contribute to self-actualization? Her questions are transferable to other topics. “... Without continual, reflective discussion of aims, education may become a poor substitute for its best vision” (Noddings, 2009, p. 426). She is an advocate of the National Education Association’s “Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education” developed 100

years ago: health; command of fundamental processes; worthy home-membership; vocation; citizenship; worthy use of leisure, and ethical character. She would add happiness. Noddings is enlightening here, especially as it pertains to my study. Since food contributes to happiness, even fundamentally as nutrition to fuel pleasurable activities, could it not be used as a device to attain this goal of curriculum? Noddings (2003) writes about food as a “lifelong source of pleasure that requires both freedom and self-control” (p. 146). Part of the reason that city dwellers like their urban life is the access to a variety of restaurants according to the World Happiness Report (Helliwell et al., 2020). The annual report ranks the happiness of citizens of 156 countries based on various criteria. The positive feelings that people in cities get from access to restaurants is contrasted in many countries by citizens unhappy because of the instability of the food supply. Food, the variety of it or the lack of it, contributes to happiness. Finland, which ranked No. 1 for the third consecutive year, has an abundance of faith in the nation’s social stability and ability to acquire life’s basic needs, including health care, food and general safety (Hetter, 2020). Seven of the 10 countries at the bottom of the World Happiness rankings are in Africa and have suffered debilitating food insecurity.

As a food-writing teacher, I find much to unpack in Noddings’ statement about the lifelong pleasure of food and how it brings both challenges and freedom. This would send me on a hunt for contemporary journalism that reflects its profundity. It could certainly lead to articles about obesity and then to others about food justice and why some have so much and others so little, often in the same city. We see the notion of lifelong pleasure in the stories of what death row inmates request for their last meals. Just before their final breaths comes something memorable to eat. There is no fuss about seeing a favorite movie one more time or a special song to listen to. It’s purely a way of conferring kindness because nutrition is not needed for

execution. Noddings (2003) also emphasizes the importance of stories and discussion around food, as well as history. She discusses food as a parental responsibility and that consideration can be transferred to classroom curriculum where it can continue to contribute to happiness.

Thornton (1988) writes that the study of curriculum development often underestimates its complexity, especially as it pertains to what teachers bring to the material. Their worldviews and experiences play a part, and that is certainly true in my case. Thirty-five years as a daily newspaper journalist, and 15 of those writing about food and plus more as a freelance writer, inform the intended curriculum. I understand how journalism, about food and other topics, contributes to the fabric of society and funds of knowledge. It is this understanding and respect for the industry that guides me as I select material and develop assignments. There is a “rich realm of mental planning” (McCutcheon, 1981) that I explored in this study.

In general, food falls into the category of “null curriculum,” an Eisner theory that refers to what students “don’t have the opportunity to learn” (Milner, 2017). But there are a lot of topics that don’t find their way into widespread university curriculum: speed dating, skateboarding, sword swallowing. These are silly examples and it is important to put food into a different category, our love affair with ubiquitous Instagram coffee photos and amateur online restaurant reviews aside. The study of food in university courses as a way to produce better citizens makes it educationally important. If we view food as educationally significant then considering it as part of the null curriculum is appropriate, according to Flinders et al. (1986). It is being excluded as a valid tool to advance cultural competence. Bruner writes that curriculum should be about “great issues, principles and values that a society deems worthy of the continual concern of its members” (1960, p. 52). What greater topic for study is there than food, without which humans cease to exist?

Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed several bodies of literature that inform my study. They are: Attitudes about and connection with food by millennials and Generation Z; the breadth of food media; curriculum development theory; cultural competence in the classroom and workplace; theories of evaluation, and reflexivity of the researcher. Millennials spend 25 percent of their budget on food and they are changing the dining and shopping landscape (Benson, 2018). Food media has proliferated in print and also digitally in the form of podcasts, blogs, photography and memoir. Social media has made everyone his or her own media outlet (Nestle & McIntosh, 2010). A multitude of curriculum theorists believe that effective curriculum is relevant to the students in the here and now and offer theories on how that can be accomplished (Bruner, 1960; Dewey, 1938; Eisner, 1978; Tyler, 2013).

The literature led me to the conclusions that my study was worthy because food is educationally significant on its own. Also, food contributes to happiness and I believe, like Noddings, that education should make people not only wiser and productive, but happy too. And lastly, the topic held great potential as a force for multicultural education and as a way to connect with students.

The evaluation of work from food writing and food media courses was guided tangentially by Scriven's goal-free evaluation, and more prominently by the educational criticism and connoisseurship theory outlined by Uhrmacher et al. (2017) and informed by Eisner. Eisner's connoisseurship and criticism theory was rooted in art, and while I am not a classic critic of the arts, I do use a critical eye to curate the media that become a cornerstone of the curriculum. I also employ his three dimensions of reflection when I develop curriculum: descriptive, interpretive and evaluative (Eisner, 1976). His notion that the arts teach us about the

world can be transferred to the study of food. The great scholar might have been pleased to see the every day of food (pie) intersecting with art (Wayne Theibaud's graphic pie paintings). But there are deeper issues about who oversees the quality of industrialized food and why some people go hungry in lands of plenty.

My long tenure as a food writer and journalist qualifies me as a connoisseur that can appreciate the nuances of the genre. I am by no means an impartial researcher. I designed the courses, including selecting material and creating assignments, with wide autonomy. It is imperative that I am transparent about this and that I recognize I am not a clean slate but instead full of opinion and purpose. Grbich (2013) writes that the key is "not to see oneself as a static centered object but as interlinked with others and undergoing processes of change" (p. 113).

Chapter Three: Methodology

In his 1978 essay, “What Do Children Learn When They Paint?,” Eisner takes the reader through the nine consequences which he believes lead to changes in children’s ability to think and perceive the world when they create art. For example, they learn to think for themselves (where should the red paint go?) and autonomy (I can decide where the red paint goes). He writes that the opportunity to bring something into existence teaches them things that math and even reading cannot; and that the process of image-making requires the forming of judgments which are internal calculations. I found that when students wrote about their experiences with food these sorts of discoveries went hand-in-hand. I considered similar though not identical findings in my study, changing the wording of his essay title to “What Do University Students Learn when They Study Food Writing and Food Media?” The question was embedded in my study questions, including evaluation of the intended curriculum. Thinking about the topic in this broad way allowed me to consider the techniques of Scriven’s goal-free evaluation (1991). Though I stated what I hoped they would learn, I allowed the program evaluation to point me toward what they did. All outcomes count and have validity (Youker & Ingraham, 2013).

Eisner (1979) described connoisseurship as the “art of appreciation,” which aptly describes my understanding and deep interest in food writing as it intersects with journalism. I am able to discern the value between a cooking story aimed at teaching a reader how to make quick pickles and a nuanced, culturally-revealing piece about a young woman who encourages her Nepalese mother to make and sell pickles in New York to preserve the family’s heritage. Eisner (1991) cautions that his use of the word “appreciation” should not be interpreted as “a

liking for” (p. 68). Uhrmacher et al. (2017) define connoisseur as someone who knows a lot about something. They go on to say that these deeply invested people believe that others would benefit from their knowledge. The gathering of the knowledge is a private affair, shown in curated shelves of artifacts, books, or other physical materials that show keen interest, maybe even obsession. Some of what is collected is stored mentally. As an example, I have taken many cooking classes and I know how to use a chef’s knife. That knowledge is stored in my mind and muscle memory. When asked to show someone how to use a knife, I can articulate why the knife should be held a certain way to achieve the proper rocking motion when dicing celery; that the fingers on the guiding hand (the one controlling the food) should be tucked under to avoid injury, and why certain cutting boards are better than others. (Wood is more responsive than plastic and the wholly unsatisfactory glass.) I am actually surprised when I explain the details of knife cutting, how complicated and even nuanced it is. I experienced some of the same feelings when I delve into how I develop curriculum.

To be useful in an education setting, connoisseurship must be followed by criticism, which Uhrmacher et al. (2017) look to Eisner to define as “disclosing what one has learned through his or her connoisseurship” (p. 2). The writers outline three sources of connoisseurship: the educator’s interest and belief of worthiness in the area of focus; that the understanding is built on first-hand, sensory experience and that the knowledge and skills can be enhanced from outsiders. This could have been written about my connoisseurship in the field of food writing and journalism. (1) I believe they both are worthy areas of study for various reasons, not the least of which is improving communication skills and connecting to culture. (2) My beliefs and understanding come from 35 years as a newspaper journalist, more than 15 of those as a food writer. And (3) my understanding is enhanced by studying the work of others by consuming food

journalism in print and digital forms, and improving my skills through both practice and professional workshops/conferences.

My connoisseurship shaped the way I devised curriculum. I don't give tests in my online food writing courses and instead rely on small group discussion and reflections on readings and other media (blogs, film, TV, podcasts) that follow a prompt from me, plus other writing exercises for assessment. The prompts were meant to guide students in their thinking and not let them fall into the comfortable niche of proclaiming what they liked or didn't like about the work. Though they did this anyway, it did not lead to insightful discussion because other students merely agree or offer tacitly that they disagree. It prevented a deeper dive into meaning. All of this shows that like many qualitative researchers, I was not an impartial analyst. My experiences and point of view imbued my curriculum development and also played a part in this study. This transparency is important in the consideration of trustworthiness, which I will address later in this chapter.

Irwin and Reynolds (2015) write that connoisseurship is theoretical and value-laden and has the ability to influence perception. My study took into consideration my knowledge of the breadth of food writing and my selection of material, and the ways those might affect student outcomes. I considered how the assigned readings, podcasts, documentaries, blogs and assignments have changed from 2014 to 2019, the years from which course work was analyzed. As an example of how I gathered the media for students to consume, I sought and included work from writers of color. I wrote in Chapter 1 that much of what we know about food has been shaped by those in power and they have been mostly White men of Northern European ethnicities. This is why students in my classes came to read works by African-Americans Toni Tipton-Martin and Michael Twitty; Asian-Americans Jennifer 8. Lee, Soleil Ho and Edward Lee,

and Latinx writers Laura Esquivel and Javier Cabral. They listened to podcasts that revealed a range of cultural food experiences. I wove this diversity into all topics, not just those focused specifically on diversity topics. For example, students listened to “Yelling about Paté” by Yousef Ghalaini on the *Family Matters* podcast as part of a unit on humor. It was important not only that the topics were diverse, but that the content producers and journalists were also. An example of this was Kimberly Chou Tsun An interviewing chef and artist Amanny Ahmad for “The Memory of Za’atar and a Free Palestine” on the *Gravy*, an award-winning podcast from the Southern Foodways Alliance at the University of Mississippi.

I did this to present a fuller picture of experiences as it relates to culture. I also believed it was important for students to see a variety of cultures, and hopefully their own, represented in the list of authors. I steered clear of the vast menu of typical food writing, i.e., stories about how to roast a Thanksgiving turkey; red, white and blue food for the Fourth of July, and weight loss diets coinciding with the new year. I sought stories with more depth that showed not only journalistic prowess but fresh and/or newsy ideas. This was why one semester the students read a story by a *Washington Post* reporter about how the communal food table on Air Force One was loaded with junk food when Barack Obama’s was president. It was an interesting juxtaposition given first lady Michelle Obama’s public platform of healthy eating and exercise. They have also read a story about President Donald Trump’s love affair with cheap fast food even though he has a caviar-and-Champagne budget.

The curriculum was also designed with opportunity for self-reflection. I provided the space for this in online small-group discussions. At the beginning of the semester, students are placed into randomly generated groups of four to five people. I looked over the groupings and occasionally made adjustments. The students in these classes are mostly women so I made sure

that the few men were not all in the same group. These were upper-level undergraduate courses and I knew many of the students, and their abilities and schoolwork habits. I sometimes rearranged the groups so that high-achieving students were dispersed among the groups and paired with students who I thought would benefit from working with deeper thinkers. This exercise was purely subjective and based on my experiences with the students.

One assignment that I assessed in this study was a personal food essay that could be about any topic, though often had something to do with a favorite food that reminded them of home. I encouraged them to stretch in both writing and thinking and go beyond getting misty eyed about grandma's spaghetti. That is why I asked them to read blogger Tiffany Langston's "Strips Clubs, Salvation and Sonic Drive-In: Hard Lessons with a Limeade and Onion Rings" and a university student's attempt to eat out of her comfort zone in "Snailed It: Who Would've Thought I'd Swap Chicken Fingers for Escargot?" The only warm-and-fuzzy story about grandma's cooking on the reading list was from a writer who wrote about her attempt to re-create those meals (and thus memories) for her own family. I was eager to study the results of these efforts because before even diving in, I could say I had been disappointed at the lack of creativity. There was a disconnect between my assignment, the readings and the student work. I looked forward to understanding why.

Goal-free evaluation recommends an outside researcher, of which I was not. GFE has its limitations and is a challenging concept because it is intended to be carried out without consideration, or even knowledge, of the goals (Shadish et al., 1991). GFE aims to "observe and measure all the outcomes, effects, or impacts, intended or unintended, all without being cued to the programs intentions" (Youker & Ingraham, 2013). The pitfalls seemed obvious but the benefit outlined by Thiagarajan (1975) is that GFE can identify positive and negative outcomes

because it considers broader and serendipitous results. The challenge for the evaluator, in this case me, is that the less tunnel-vision scrutiny, the more clear the findings. Scriven (1991) writes that the open-minded evaluator can find the actual effects rather than be tempted to “check on alleged effect” (1991, p. 57). In the case of this study, Scriven would say it is a waste of time to evaluate whether students learned that food writing is more than cookbooks and recipes or that there are better ways to describe food other than “good” and “delicious.” Those outcomes were obvious. The value of GFE is “noticing something that everyone else has overlooked, or in producing a novel overall perspective” (Scriven, 1991, p. 58). Before I re-read one piece of work, I could say that students had a deeper understanding of the connections between food and culture after they take my classes. But what did I miss? What did they think about journalism after these courses? What else would come to the surface by coding and analyzing their responses and reactions to food media, including journalistic writing, podcasts, non-fiction food books and memoir? My broad research questions left me open for all answers.

I developed the curriculum of the food writing courses to expose students to the broad genre of food writing highlighting cooking stories, cookbooks and food criticism along with harder-hitting journalism pieces encompassing politics, culture, food safety, food justice, agriculture and the economy. I included similar areas of study for the food media courses. I did not consider the courses or lessons as a way to foster cultural competence or to study culture in general. Anecdotally, that byproduct of the curriculum bubbled to the surface when student reactions to the material pointed that way. Goal-free evaluation became a useful method of analysis for me because cultural competence outcomes were not built into the purpose of the courses.

The other assignments included in the study were written reflections on assigned books, and readings and online small group discussions on various topics, plus a semester-end reflection on knowledge of the food writing/food media genre. Social justice food writing, or “food writing as activism,” included stories such as “Why We Can’t Talk About Race in Food,” *Civileats.com*; “Harvey and Irma Wiped Out our Kitchens. Still, We Cook,” *New York Times*, and “Chasing the Harvest: It Used to Be Only Men Did This Job,” *Seriouseats.com*. Articles about food appropriation fell into this category. The concept is a subset of cultural appropriation and is not about who can make what food but rather about opportunity and livelihood. Students had strong and lively reactions to this. Studying multiple responses revealed patterns. Among the readings that explain food appropriation were “When Chefs Become Famous Cooking Other Cultures’ Food,” National Public Radio, and “Why Everyone Should Stop Calling ‘Immigrant Food’ Ethnic Food,” *Washington Post*.

Design of the Study

Educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology suited my study because it combined my expertise in the field and the critical eye that I focused on outcomes. Uhrmacher et al. (2017) outline an “instructional arc” model and that had promise. Their arc begins with the intended curriculum (what the teacher planned), rises to operational curriculum (what actually happened) and moves to the received curriculum (what students take away). I tweaked the arc to intended curriculum (what I planned), enacted curriculum (what students experienced) and untaught lessons (what they learned through their own observations). Rich detail and storytelling is part of the Chapter Four findings and Chapter Five discussion. Examples of student work showed what the students felt. The courses that I analyzed were cases of why and how the study of food writing and food media is received by students. The detail of the analysis came from the

evaluation of student work. My study design didn't mesh completely with traditional program evaluation because I did not evaluate a program to justify its continuation but rather analyzed the course work for what the "clients" experienced from it. However, it still had value as a method for my study. Hamilton and Parlett (1972) write of "illuminative evaluation" that emphasizes "description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction" (p. 10). This described my intentions. In this study, the "program" evaluated was 10 semesters of food writing and food media courses and the "clients" were undergraduate college students, though I hated the transactional sound of that. I liked to think of the work we did as collaborative. Flinders (1996) writes that teachers don't simply deliver content, they interact with students to "interpret ideas, construct understanding and make meaning" (p. 352). The courses I evaluated were required for a graduate certificate in food writing and photography, and were cross-listed and taken by undergraduates in greater numbers. I evaluated the work in the undergraduate courses because there was a larger data set and because the students were mostly age 18 to 22 which translated to generally fewer life experiences. The perceived cleaner slate made me think that the curriculum could be more enlightening to them. The undergraduates who took the courses were overwhelmingly Mass Communication majors who used the credits earned to satisfy elective requirements for the major.

Curriculum Development

In Chapter 4, I address in detail the development of the curriculum. A discussion of my planning will contribute to the understanding of the ways that I hoped to guide students to my intended outcome. An example of how I developed reading assignments: When the Food Writing course ended each December, I began flagging interesting food stories as I saw them to consider for the course the next fall. I did this through July, stopping to begin gathering material for the

semester that begins in August. Sometimes I added new media during the semester. I noted trends in topics. I kept an eye out for new food-focused books, including memoir and non-fiction. I was a judge in one of the journalism categories of the annual James Beard Media Awards and that also showed me the breadth of what is being written about. In the Wine, Beer and Spirits category, I had more than 85 stories to consider in 2019. This showed me where writers were publishing, crucial information as students leave our program and begin to look for jobs. Considerable mental planning went into this course. Likewise for my spring semester food podcasting class for which my experience as a contributor on a public radio podcast played a part. I understood the genre because I was part of it. I also spent time in the months after and before this class assessing new food podcasts, much like I did for food writing. The study of media must be contemporary to retain relevance. This I believed and my beliefs informed the curriculum. I considered this in my analysis.

Data Collection

There was a trove of student work from my classes at a Florida public university that could be included in the data collection for this study. However, I culled the selection to work addressing the issue of student thought about and reaction to cultural issues, food writing and food media. I used the phrase food media to identify mass communication whose central theme is food, and for my study that is food writing/journalism, television and podcasts.

Some of the work assigned in the classes was aimed at improving writing skills but those assignments were not included in the data collection nor are the assignments that addressed cookbooks, recipes, the evolution of TV cooking shows and how food coverage is tied to the calendar, especially holidays. I excluded these works because they were not meaty enough to show the breadth of student engagement nor did they apply directly to my study questions. Also,

the media that accompanied the assignments chosen for study revealed more about the ways in which I designed the curriculum. This allowed me to study the connection, or lack thereof, between the intended and enacted curriculum.

Of the 10 courses from which data was collected, nine were taught online. The courses were Food Writing from the Fall semesters 2014, 2015 (the only face-to-face course), 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. The other classes were four semesters of Food in Communication 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. In 2016 and 2017, Food in Communication was about food on TV, mostly focusing on the evolution of cooking shows, food-centric travel shows and the ways in which food, families and kitchens have been portrayed on sitcoms. The following two semesters (2018 and 2019), the special topics course focused on food podcasts. Collectively in the food writing courses there were 118 undergraduates. In the Food in Communication courses, there were 98 students for a total of 216 students in all classes. Twenty-one students took both courses.

Some of the course content changed from semester to semester in both assignments and readings. They were living-breathing classes for which the readings were updated to reflect popular media and current events/trends. For example, added to the reading list after the election of Trump were articles about how his immigration policies were affecting both farmers and the workers who harvest the food that makes it to our grocery stores. This was part of my philosophy in selecting material for the classes. I wanted the work to engage the students but also show them the current state of journalistic storytelling in the genre of food communication. In Food Writing, students read two to three trade books each semester and they were not repeated in subsequent semesters. This allowed me to assign recently published books, among them memoir and non-fiction narrative. In 2014, students were assigned *Tender at the Bone: Growing Up at the Table* by Ruth Reichl and *Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation* by Michael Pollan, which was

published the year before. (Though *Tender at the Bone* was not new, I thought it was an important introduction to food memoir since it was well regarded in the genre.) In 2019, they read *Notes from a Young Black Chef: A Memoir* by Kwame Onwuachi, published that same year, and then had a choice of three books, *Cork Dork: A Wine-Fueled Adventure Among the Obsessive Sommeliers, Big Bottle Hunters, and Rogue Scientists Who Taught Me to Live for Taste* by Bianca Bosker; *Hippie Food: How Back-to-the-Landers, Long Hairs and Revolutionaries Changed the Way We Eat* by Jonathan Kauffman, and *You and I Eat The Same: On the Countless Ways Food and Cooking Connect Us to One Another* by Chris Ying. I offered a choice of books to allow students to select a topic that interested them, though I was fully aware they some were likely to check Amazon and then pick the book with the fewest pages. Authors Reichl, Pollan, Bosker and Kauffman all have journalism roots, and Pollan is a professor in the University of California, Berkeley's graduate journalism school. (See Appendix A for list of assigned readings that were part of this analysis). The reading assignments illustrated that the analysis from class to class was not apples to apples. Rather, the assignments were selected for analysis because they best addressed the study question about student experience with the enacted curriculum.

Tables 1 and 2 show the assignments and numbers of each one analyzed from Food Writing and Food in communication courses (See pages 47-48). The assignments for classes are outlined in detail Appendix B. For this chapter of the dissertation proposal, I offered these two examples:

Food Writing: Week 13 (2017-2018)

Assigned readings:

- “Why Everyone Should Stop Calling ‘Immigrant Food’ Ethnic Food,” by Lavanya Ramanathan, *Washington Post*
- “Adrian Miller: Love, Peace and Soooooooul Food” by Toni Tipton-Martin on her blog, *The Jemima Code*
- “I had Never Eaten in Ghana. But My Ancestors Had” by Michael Twitty, writing in *Bon Appetit* magazine
- “Diverse Identities are Central to Food Writing” by Nik Sharma, writing on Dianne Jacob’s blog
- “Why We Can’t Talk about Race in Food,” *CivilEats.com*
- “When Chefs Become Famous Cooking Other Culture’s Food,” by Mary Goody, NPR

Small group discussion prompt from these readings:

There are a lot of readings this week, though most are fairly short. You will need to read them all to really understand the issue of “food appropriation.” I will be looking for evidence that you have done this in your response to the prompt. What does the phrase “food appropriation” mean to you? Had you heard of the term before this week’s readings? In what ways do you think food writers might perpetuate some of the stereotypes surrounding certain foods and how we refer to them? For instance, what is “ethnic food” and why do we make that distinction, especially in a nation of immigrants that is becoming increasingly diverse.

Food in Communication, TV: Week 11 (2014-15)

Reflection assignment on diversity and/or gender roles:

A 1,000-word reflection on diversity and/or gender roles on TV shows in which food or cooking is prominent. This is an opinion piece that will show you've done some research into the topic. I will know you've done some research because you've quote or cited at least TWO sources. I am looking for evidence of critical thinking and an original point of view. You MAY use first person. CHECK spelling, grammar and make sure you've included the correct spelling of any people. Five points off for each name that is misspelled. It's Paula Deen (not Dean); it's Gordon Ramsay (not Ramsey); it's Andrew Zimmern (not Zimmer). Names of shows should be in italics.

Respecting students

To protect the anonymity of the students in the classes, I did not use their names nor give them pseudonyms. When I referred to the work of a specific student, I wrote "one student" or "this student," and I do understand that by doing this the reader gets a characterless view of the student. Sex, age, year in school, major, race or ethnicity could be interesting determinants if I compared responses based on these factors, but I did not believe this was pertinent to my questions nor did I have all of this information. Though pseudonyms weren't likely to identify the students, they could create a picture of the person in the reader's mind. Betty could conjure a different image than María or Kirti. I did not want the perceived background or ethnicity of students to be the focus but rather the information that they provided through their work. I did no other data collection, such as interviews or observations, for this study. This was a program evaluation with written documents as data.

Table 1.**Assignments and numbers of each analyzed from Food Writing courses; total 486:**

| Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | Fall 2018 | Fall 2019 |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| End-of-semester assessment (15) | N/A. No record of assessment because it was oral in face-to face class | End-of-semester assessment (18) | End-of-semester assessment (19) | End-of-semester assessment (26) | End-of-semester assessment (20) |
| Personal food essays (15) | Personal food essays (16) | Personal food essays (18) | Personal food essays (20) | Personal food essays (29) | Personal food essays (22) |
| Reflection on assigned book about food culture (15) | Reflection on assigned book about food culture (14) | Reflection on assigned book about food culture (16) | Reflection on assigned book about food culture (16) | Reflection on assigned book about food culture (26) | Reflection on assigned book about food culture (20) |
| Farmers Market vendor profile (13) | Farmers Market vendor profile (16) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| N/A | N/A | Response to diversity webinar (16) | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | Food Writing as Activism assignment (26) | Food Writing as Activism assignment (22) |
| N/A | N/A | N/A | Discussion: Food appropriation (19) | Discussion: Food appropriation (29) | Discussion: Food appropriation (20) |
| Total: 58 | Total: 46 | Total: 68 | Total: 74 | Total: 136 | Total: 104 |

Table 2.

Assignments and numbers of each analyzed from Food in Communication courses; total 314:

| Spring 2016 Food on TV | Spring 2017 Food on TV | Spring 2018 Food Podcasts | Spring 2019 Food Podcasts |
|--|--|--|--|
| N/A | N/A | End-of-semester assessment (25) | End-of-semester assessment (27) |
| N/A | Reflection on diversity/gender roles on TV food shows (17) | N/A | N/A |
| Discussion: What we learn about culture from TV food shows (23) | Discussion: What we learn about culture from TV food shows (18) | N/A | N/A |
| Research paper proposal (23) | Research paper proposal (16) | N/A | N/A |
| Discussion: TV chefs in hot water and verbal wars (21) | Discussion: TV chefs in hot water and verbal wars (19) | N/A | N/A |
| N/A | N/A | Podcast diversity report (25) | N/A |
| N/A | N/A | Discussion: The Southern Table (24) | Discussion: The Southern Table (27) |
| N/A | N/A | Discussion: Travel by podcast (23) | N/A |
| N/A | N/A | N/A | Discussion: Pod save diversity (26) |
| Total: 67 | Total: 70 | Total: 97 | Total: 80 |

Analysis Methods

I had read none of the student work since it was initially submitted and graded. Because of this, I came to the work with fresh eyes. I had never looked at the work in terms of themes or with the focus of study questions. My only interaction with the work was the initial grading during the semester it was assigned. I used deductive and inductive coding methods on the texts that I analyzed and provide more detail about their development in Chapter Four. Miles et al.

(2014) provided a map for my coding journey that led me to themes. For example, in 115 personal food essays, I expected to find themes of “home cooking,” “mothers,” “eating ‘unusual’ food for the first time,” and “holiday/special meals.” I was aware of how the themes connected to personal culture. I looked for these themes in the first cycle of reading. In the second cycle (and actually during the first), inductive codes surfaced. I remained open to what Saldaña (2003) calls storyline. Saldaña is on the forefront of ethnodrama research methodology and though I didn’t write one, the lyrical ways in which students wrote were noted.

The assessment was thick with rich detail. I jotted my initial observations as I read the work, followed by more in-depth observations when I more studied each data set, i.e., each class, more closely. Coding triggered thought (Miles et al., 2014) and I analyzed as I read. Appendix D and Appendix E are the jottings and observations presented as I wrote them while reading the data.

Thornberg and Charmaz (2014) write “coding helps researchers see the familiar in new light” and helps them “avoid forcing data into preconceptions” (p. 156). I kept this in the forefront of my mind as I studied the student work. This promise was part of the trustworthiness of the work. Being committed to honestly hearing what the data told me was crucial in answering the study question about how students experienced the enacted curriculum. The purpose and goals of the courses as stated on the relevant syllabuses are in Appendix C. This was important data because along with the assignments that I developed for the courses it showed how I have changed the curriculum. The reading material and other assigned media eventually included more cultural components and authors of color, and reflected what I studied myself in my doctoral classes, especially those that focused on curriculum and diversity. The changes also reflected the growing seriousness of topics covered by food journalists.

There are computer programs that aid in qualitative analysis but I chose to do the work by hand. My experiences and expertise were so intertwined with the curriculum that reading them again was enlightening and instructive. For the most part I knew what I was hoping to achieve with the assignments but beyond giving grades, I had not considered other outcomes. I looked at the data with new eyes and new purpose. What did they learn and was it even possible to tell? Working the data by hand allowed me to go back to those classes and my own mindset when I developed the curriculum. It also allowed me to reflect on Greene's (2009) notion that to the learner, curriculum tends to be a hodgepodge of material tossed together for various reasons: state or university requirements; the teacher's proclivities, whims of an academic department, or priorities set by who knows. In essence, students don't know much about why they are asked to learn what they are asked to learn. I kept this in mind while I worked through my process of finding/seeing/discovering the themes. Because "Feasting on Words" was a qualitative study, I believed it important to get reacquainted with the data intimately. In reading the work, I could hear the students' voices because I knew many of them well, having had them in other courses. "Coding is also heuristic – a method of discovery" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 73). The authors describe coding as prompts that can trigger deeper reflection. I sought the patterns from the data chunks that run from course to course, semester to semester.

Miles et al. (2014) have a list of types of coding that can be sought in a first cycle reading of the data. I have already noted that I looked for themes in the personal essays such as "home cooking," "mothers," "eating 'unusual' food for the first time," and "holiday/special meals." These would fall under "values" coding. I was open to other examples such as "in vivo" coding but while I found those codes, like the multitude of times "I was surprised" was used, I did not feel it was a code that got me closer to answering my study questions. "Emotion" coding was

also used, mostly because students were assertive in their beliefs especially, I suspected, because they were communicating via computer rather than face-to-face.

Chapter Four will enumerate the codes for each assignment. Emotion codes that I expected from the assignment about food appropriation were “confusion” based on the literature and the newness of the concept to students. The coding on the reflections about an assigned book on food culture was trickier because each semester involved a different book. However, “discovery” was an overarching deductive theme. Food appropriation is a subset of cultural appropriation, and is used to describe when a person or group from a dominant culture colonizes food from another country or ethnic group usually for economic gain.

I was most excited about what the inductive coding brought, and remained open to where the codes led. Those codes, detailed with examples in Chapter Four, emerged as I jotted whatever words or phrases came to mind. In a number of places throughout the data set I noted that students were adept at storytelling and that the writing seemed almost cathartic, especially when referring to a troubled relationship or the concept of longing. “Storytelling” became an inductive code and showed me ways the curriculum was synthesized into their lives. That students made connections with their own stories and relationships through food writing was an untaught lesson.

Table 3 describes and defines the deductive and inductive codes for the study. (See page 53).

Trustworthiness of the Study

Qualitative studies aren’t necessarily meant to be repeatable, such as in quantitative research. I use this example: Quantitative research can tell us how many children are on the free and reduced lunch program at a given school but a qualitative study can tell us how a child feels

to not have the money to pay for lunch. The goal of my study was to peel the onion, so to speak, on student course work to understand what they take away from food writing/food media classes. My primary data source was written student course work. It was augmented by the syllabuses and course work that I designed. Because of this, I did not do any member checking, which would allow participants to read the findings and provide feedback. “Member reflections are less a *test* of research findings as they are an opportunity for *collaboration* and reflexive *elaboration*” (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). I was not looking for this and believed that member checking would take the study into another arena that didn’t pertain. Tracy also writes that good quality work is marked by complexity and abundance. I looked at this abundance and complexity in my data in terms of the volume of work combined with the variety of assignments. I could have gotten a picture of what students experience from the enacted curriculum if I only analyzed the personal food essays. However, a fuller account was achieved by studying work from various assignments. This made my study more complex and added to its heft.

Miles et al. (2014) write that careful record keeping is at the core of quality qualitative studies. Meticulous records aid the evaluator but they also let readers know the path that was taken to reach results. Also, other researchers may want to know how I came to my conclusions so records and transparency were crucial. By including pertinent data in the appendices, readers and researchers (and aren’t they one in the same?) will be able to see the data interpretations themselves. A clear connection from the data to the coding to the results was made.

Grbich (2013) enumerates seven essential concepts used to assess the quality of qualitative studies. The concepts can be used through both internal and external evaluation. Those concepts are: Clarification; Justification; Process, Representativeness; Interpretation; Reflexivity, and Transferability. The last one can be problematic if not properly interpreted.

Table 3.

Deductive and Inductive Codebook

| |
|---|
| DEDUCTIVE CODES |
| Relationships: Where students wrote about interactions with family, friends, spouses, lovers and classmates. (Values) |
| Food interest: Where students reflected on their experiences with homecooked food, holiday and special meals, new cuisines, and favorite foods. (Emotion) |
| Food Writing/Food Media. Where students showed their understanding of the genres as they pertain to journalism. (Values) |
| Expectations: Comments about expectations for the course, material or even what they might learn. (Values) |
| Discovery. Expression of discovery about new information and concepts. (Values) |
| Confusion. Where students expressed questions about material or concepts. (Emotion) |
| Surprise. Statements that indicated a concept or the field of food journalism/media was new to them and something they hadn't realized existed before or at least not in such depth or variety. (Values) |
| INDUCTIVE CODES |
| Call to action. Where students voiced the desire for societal changes or actually suggested what action could be taken. This code is also used to show where students were drawn to social justice/current events issues. (Values) |
| Storytelling. Where students flexed their storytelling muscles to the point of the work being entertaining, cathartic and/or publishable. (Emotion) |
| Defiance. Opposition to message or content of assignment material. (Emotion) |
| Confidence. The ways in which students showed steadfast belief in their own reactions to material or belief systems. (Values) |
| Enthusiasm. Where students showed enthusiasm for the material and/or their classmates' reactions. (Emotion) |
| Preconceived notions. Where students noted they thought they knew all about a subject or food before enacting with material. (Values) |
| Sophistication. Where students showed full understanding of the concepts and the intended curriculum pushed them deeper in their thinking. (Values) |
| Group think. Places where the initial discussion prompt responses shaped the discussion group thread and all participants agreed. (Emotion) |
| Technology/technique. Responses in which students show what they learned about current technology and/or media production. (Emotion) |
| Media familiarity. Places in which students showed they were familiar or unfamiliar with assigned media or drew connections to other platforms that they already knew. (Values) |

Transferability does not equal repeatability. Grbich uses this word to encourage the academic to think about how the findings connect to current knowledge, research or policy, and if they contribute successfully to knowledge. My study hit on all seven of Grbich's essentials, which aided its trustworthiness.

- Clarification. The aim of my study was clear and my questions reflected what I studied.
- Justification. Qualitative methodology was the best method for this study because it had the ability to uncover deeper meaning than what could come from the hard numbers of quantitative methods. I described why my work was situated primarily in educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology and tangentially in goal-free evaluation.
- Process. The data collection technique was clearly defined and ethical considerations were vetted. I was detailed about where and who the data came from and why I chose the specific coursework for assessment.
- Representativeness. I considered all data, and even that which did not specifically answer the research questions was included in the results. Once I began my coding and analysis, I did not change the assignments being studied even if they resulted in limited relevancy.
- Interpretation. This was the core part of the study, showing a strong link to the literature review and also reflecting my connoisseurship.
- Reflexivity. I wrote in a number of places that I was not an impartial researcher because I analyzed data from students in the classes that I taught from the curriculum I developed. I was clear about my knowledge of and work in the field

of food journalism. This set me up as an expert but also as a target. Was I too involved, a critic might ask? This was why transparency and meticulous record keeping were crucial. My closeness to the subject allowed me to see nuance but it also demanded rigorous questioning of the data.

- Transferability. It was my hope that my research would show that the study of food writing/food media has the ability to connect with students across the curriculum. In this way, it contributes to knowledge.

In summary, I used educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology to evaluate 10 semesters of food writing and food media courses to address my study questions. My broad questions allowed me to hew to goal-free evaluation, looking to the data to guide my results rather than have the data prove or disprove a point.

Chapter Four: Findings

In 2018, the #metoo movement blew up on social media. Women all over the world were using the hashtag to draw attention to posts about their experiences of sexual assault and harassment. *Glamour* magazine (“Post-Weinstein,” 2019) created an online gallery of famous men behaving unethically, sometimes criminally. Among the torrent of accounts were allegations lodged against movie mogul Harvey Weinstein in late 2017. He was eventually charged, tried and convicted of rape (Aratani & Pilkington, 2020). More entertainers were accused, including actors Kevin Spacey and Steven Seagal. Politicians were not immune and Al Franken of Minnesota gave up his U.S. Senate seat in 2018 when allegations of improprieties surfaced. *Today Show* host Matt Lauer was booted from his job after accusations of sexual harassment. Fox network CEO Roger Ailes had already been ousted for similar reasons. At the 2018 Academy Awards, the #metoo movement came center stage when host Jimmy Kimmel, along with presenters and actors, addressed the culture of sexual harassment and assault in the entertainment industry using the slogan and social media hashtag #TimesUp to demand a reckoning (Barnes, 2018). By that time, #metoo had been used nearly 20 million times on Twitter (Brown, 2018).

What does this have to do with food writing and my program evaluation?

Celebrity chef, restaurateur and cookbook author Mario Batali and New Orleans chef and restaurant group magnate John Besh were both dethroned by the movement. Their female employees and colleagues emboldened by #metoo went public with accusations. As of 2020 neither men have yet to resurface in a meaningful way. Food journalists at major publications,

including the *New York Times*, were thrust into lead positions on coverage teams. They knew better than other writers at their publications of the contributions of Batali and Besh to American culinary culture. After Hurricane Katrina slammed into New Orleans in 2005, Besh was one of the city's biggest champions, opening more restaurants instead of pulling up stakes to start somewhere else. His confidence in the city was partially credited for the revival of its legendary culinary scene (Severson, 2007). So the food writers, who often wrote more about dining out and cooking trends, tackled what some might call meatier fare. As a former journalist and food editor turned university instructor, I recognized the value of their work and added it to the readings for my fall 2018 online food writing course. Students read Kim Severson's *New York Times* piece, "Food Writing in the #MeToo Era." And also Christine Huang's "Queer in the Kitchen: Gender Politics Takes Front Stage" in *Civileats.com*. It only took a couple weeks into a semester for students to realize that food writing and other types of food communication were not solely about Grandma's candy cane cookies or scathing reviews of the corner noodle shop on Chowhound. Likewise after the election of Trump and the onset of his anti-immigration position and policies, food writers gravitated toward stories about the contributions of immigrants, including undocumented workers, to the American table. In my classes, students tackled the topic of food appropriation, ethnic vs. immigrant food, and diversity in food writing. They read "Why We Can't Talk about Race in Food" from *CivilEats.com* and "To This Black Lives Matter Founder, Activism Begins in the Kitchen" from the *Washington Post*. "Chasing the Harvest: It Used to be Only Men Who Did This Job" from *SeriousEats.com* addressed both gender and immigrant farmworker issues. Paraphrased from my observation of the data on this topic: As I reread this work in 2020, I looked for articles with opposing viewpoints and the label food appropriation, which is most often used to describe when a person or group from a dominant

culture colonizes food from a less dominant group for economic gain. They were difficult to find until I googled “food appropriation is bull shit” after trying other words/phrases paired with food appropriation such as “overly sensitive,” “opposition,” “not real.” The B.S. phrase search resulted in serious rants but the sources were not journalists and I felt including them on the reading list was unnecessarily pandering. My connoisseurship was embedded throughout the curriculum for the courses that I taught. The results of my interpretation of 800 pieces of student work showed this.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate what students learned in the food writing and food media courses that I teach at a Florida public university. Through coding methods, I evaluated 10 semesters of undergraduate courses, which included 800 documents from 216 students. There were 15 to 29 students enrolled in each class; 21 students took two of the three classes. Among the evaluated documents were their course-end assessment of the classes plus other written assignments and discussion responses on journalistic articles and other media with food as the central theme. I considered reflective writing on assigned non-fiction books that included Michael Twitty’s *The Cooking Gene: A Journey Through African-American Culinary History in the Old South*, Jennifer 8. Lee’s *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles: Adventures in the World of Chinese Food*, and Ruth Reichl’s *Tender at the Bone: Growing Up at the Table*, plus two others. Appendix B is the full accounting of the assignments evaluated.

The evaluation of this data was driven by my study questions:

1. What is the intended curriculum in post secondary food writing and food media courses?
2. What do students experience from the enacted curriculum?
3. What are the untaught lessons of the curriculum for students?

I primarily used educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology outlined by Uhrmacher et al. (2017) and informed by Eisner (1979), in conjunction with techniques from Scriven's goal-free evaluation model (1991). GFE allowed me to enter into the study without an end point in mind. I let the data guide me toward my conclusions using deductive and inductive coding as the analysis tools. Rather than wait until I had read all of the coursework, I analyzed as I went using a subjective approach in which I focused on my reaction to the students' own words. The qualitative educational criticism and connoisseurship method suited my study because it recognized my expertise in the field and allowed me to train a critical eye on the outcomes. The results of the study showed that my understanding of journalism and food culture are embedded in the curriculum. What I know enlightened students about how food writing can also be culture writing, and how it also intersects with topics of health, economics, history, politics, and social justice.

In this chapter, I address the creation of the intended curriculum and how it was shaped by my connoisseurship and philosophies. I explain the curriculum development of the three courses that I studied, and then outline my coding methods along with the deductive codes and the subsequent inductive codes that surfaced. Lastly, I offer excerpts from the coursework that exemplify the codes and speak to my second and third questions about how students enacted with the curriculum and what untaught lessons surfaced. Chapter Five includes discussion and ideas for further study.

Creation of the Curriculum

In Chapter 3, I touched on how I developed the curriculum for the Food Writing and Food in Communication courses. I expand on that here. As a university instructor I teach four courses a semester, two of them are general journalism courses. The other two are either food

photography and occasionally other non-food related electives in addition to food writing and food media courses. I also developed and lead a summer study abroad program, taking students to France and Germany for a food and travel writing experience. While the names of the food writing and food media courses are stagnant, the assigned books, readings and multimedia material changed frequently. The study of journalism, including food journalism, is rooted in current events. I know this instinctively after my decades-long tenure in daily newspaper journalism. Food writing no longer thrives in print newspapers and the Association of Food Journalists is folding in 2020 after promoting the work of mostly newspaper writers for 46 years (Sugar, 2020). The death of AFJ does not mean the death of food writing. It has moved online with a trove of work on sites such as Serious Eats, Civil Eats, Grub Street and Food 52, which were never part of the print world but in a sort of backward progression have spawned traditional cookbooks.

McCutcheon's (1981) idea of the "rich realm" of mental planning for teachers was evident in the design of my food writing and food media courses, especially in regard to the selection of material. I hardly ever stop thinking about food writing because I am connected to the genre through personal and professional interests. I subscribe to newsletters such as Stained Page News, which tells me weekly about new and soon-to-be published cookbooks and that also aggregates news and feature articles on the topic, including profiles of authors. I know that the James Beard Foundation is having a reckoning about the racial equity of its awards program in the aftermath of the George Floyd killing and subsequent racial justice protests because I am a member (and an award judge) of the foundation. I follow dozens of food writers on various social media platforms, and have grown my knowledge of the work of food writers of color through them. The Instagram hashtag #blackchefsmatter led me to a group that recently started

monthly communal cooking events featuring cookbooks by Black authors. In September 2020, we baked from *The New Way to Cake* by Benjamini Ebuehi and shared photos of our dishes on Instagram. I have a collection of about 750 cookbooks and lament the dismantling of the vast cookbook library at the *Tampa Bay Times* after I left. I rescue old recipe boxes not for the vintage receptacles but for the worn-and-torn recipe cards inside. Who would get rid of those family mementoes? In my mind, the more beat-up the cards, the better the recipe. And to slide further down the recipe box rabbit hole, I keep an eye on the work of Dirty Pages, an organization in Nashville, Tennessee, that seeks to preserve the culture of family recipes, its name a nod to the splattered pages of well-used cookbooks.

In addition to these examples of my immersion into contemporary food writing, I have been honored for my newspaper work by various organizations. The section that I helmed at the *Tampa Bay Times* for 15 years was three times named best section in the country among the nation's largest papers including the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Boston Globe* by the Association of Food Journalists. (Thankfully, the *New York Times* didn't enter that competition). My cookbook *Cookielicious: 150 Fabulous Recipes to Bake and Share* was published in 2010. An essay about cooking a week's worth of Crock-Pot cuisine was included in *Best Food Writing 2001*. I continue to speak on food topics for local groups, including two talks in 2019 about the intersection of politics, culture and cookbooks. Also that year, I conducted a webinar on cookbook editing for ACES: The Society for Editing. Other ways that I keep my hand in the profession is my contributor status to WUSF Public Media's podcast *The Zest* and freelance work for the *Tampa Bay Times* and Visit Florida, the state's tourism website.

My continuing academic education has also influenced the course curriculum and I consider this more completely in Chapter 5. In fall 2018 I embarked on my quest to earn a

Doctorate of Education in Program Development at University of South Florida. This dissertation is the culmination of that journey. Through my coursework, I earned certificates in Qualitative Research in Education and Diversity in Education. As I write more about the curriculum development of the three classes and the results of the study, I will note where my doctoral work and other continuing professional training intersected with the classes.

I took a leave of absence from the *Tampa Bay Times* in fall 2014 to fill a one-semester visiting position at the university. I had already been an adjunct and been enlisted by the then-department chair to develop the graduate Food Writing and Photography Certificate program. She was a self-described foodie and saw the potential for the program as something that would interest students and generate revenue. In spring 2015, the one-semester assignment was converted to a three-year visiting position and I left my newspaper career after 35 years. The chair's instincts about the program proved true and the tuition generated by the non-degree seeking students was enough to convince administration to hire me as a permanent instructor when the three-year appointment concluded. That explains the genesis of the graduate certificate program but not why I chose to analyze undergraduate work over graduate for this study. The primary reason was because the data set was larger; fewer than 10 graduates are in each course compared to about 20 undergraduates. The courses are cross-listed and are taken by both graduates and undergraduates. They are online so the students do not mingle in the virtual classroom and in fact many don't realize there is another group study the topic simultaneously. I evaluated the undergraduate work because I surmised that their generally younger ages meant their life experiences would be fewer, i.e. they had not traveled as much, cooked extensively or were exposed to many other cuisines. I address the veracity of this assumption in Chapter Five.

The Three Classes

The classes that I studied included Food Writing, which is taught each fall, and Food in Communication, a spring semester class. These are the two required courses for the 12-credit graduate certificate. (In the early stages of the program the required courses were Food Writing and a culminating Applied Research Project. The ARP requirement was replaced by the Food in Communication Class. This was requested by the Graduate Studies office, which did not want a S/U graded class as a required part of the program.) Both courses can be taken as major electives for undergraduates in the Journalism and Digital Communication department and can also be counted as electives for students in other majors. I have had students in these classes from political science, anthropology, hospitality, business, criminology, English, advertising and public relations. They are often taken as electives by students in the Digital Journalism and Design master's program by students not enrolled in the certificate program. The Food in Communication special topics class is generically named so that I can change the focus as I see fit. In 2016 and 2017, the students studied food on TV, specifically the evolution of cooking shows, food-travel programming and the portrayal of food on sitcoms. After those two semesters, I began to align the classes more closely with journalistic endeavors and the focus of the course in 2018 and 2019 was food podcasts. I introduced the podcasting genre and showed the breadth of topics explored including diversity, history and culture, and required them to create a podcasts. They recorded three episodes and began to master digital skills coveted in industry. The basic skills of idea generation, planning, researching, recording, editing and publishing are transferable to any topic and the digital education dovetails with the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) direction of our department.

That is the evolution of the classes. The next section covers the curriculum development of each one.

Food Writing

I designed and subsequently taught the Food Writing courses evaluated in this study in the fall semesters, 2014-2019. The purpose of the Food Writing class, as stated on the syllabuses, was to:

Study how cultural, economic, political and health connections to food are translated into the written word in a mostly journalistic style. By the end of the semester, students will understand the wide variety of storytelling techniques used to communicate our connections with food, be they economic, political, scientific, sustainable or pleasurable.

That's quite lofty and after studying 98 end-of-semester assessments it's clear that most students never read that judging from their surprise at the scope of food writing topics.

The intended curriculum for this class was the assigned books, articles and other media including video lectures, documentaries and other videos. Much of the content changed from semester to semester to include the aforementioned current events topics. For example, the 2015 documentary *City of Gold*, about Los Angeles restaurant critic Jonathan Gold, became part of the curriculum in 2017 once I realized how well it illustrated the culture writing aspect of food criticism. Gold is the only food critic to win a Pulitzer Prize (2007). He died in 2018 at age 57.

My plan of attack started them slowly with topics they were familiar with, mostly eating and cooking. Assignments in the early weeks of the course included video lectures from me on the ways to write about food, specifically going beyond "good," "nice" and "awesome" as descriptors. They wrote a first-person essay with food at its core after studying how other writers connect food to their experiences. I introduced them to Proust's "Madeleine Moment," a phrase

that describes how a nibble of food can involuntarily transport us to another place and time. I have not been fully satisfied with the results of this assignment, which tended to be laden with sentences that started with “I” and chronologically told tales of special meals with a love interest. After studying 120 essays for this evaluation, I learned why. Spoiler alert for upcoming results analysis: I was so hell-bent on the idea that they would craft publishable pieces that I missed what they were experiencing. For many of the students, especially those who wrote about beloved grandparents, even parents, now gone, the assignment was cathartic. I wanted it to be an end point, but for most it was the beginning of a journey. I show examples later in this chapter.

The semester plan then moved to a look at cookbooks, food stories that had a news angle like the ones previously mentioned and also listed in Appendix A, and restaurant criticism. For most of them, cookbooks were something that they might have seen around their homes growing up although only a few owned one. What’s the need when the Internet overflows with ways to grill burgers and bake potatoes? But the cookbook genre is still robust in an era of sagging book sales (Maynard, 2019). The e-cookbook did not really catch on, and I used the cookbook as a way to teach about point of view and relevancy. Since Trump’s political rise there has been a strong trend in American-published cookbooks featuring Mideast cuisines with names such as *Israeli Soul* (2018), *Bottom of the Pot: Persian Recipes and Stories* (2018), and *Our Syria: Recipes from Home* (2017). As a connoisseur of food writing and its relation to current events and journalism, I found this trend in vivid contrast with Trump’s 2017 Muslim travel ban. Many of the people affected and certainly those targeted by the ban come from the countries that these cookbooks celebrate. Another trend that can be interpreted as a response to strong nationalistic policies from the White House are cookbooks that feature immigrant chefs, and there have been several of those including *We Are La Cocina: Recipes in Pursuit of the American Dream* (2019)

and *The Immigrant Cookbook: Recipes that Make America Great Again* (2017). I found that discussions about these trends and giving students an opportunity to offer their own ideas for cookbooks, laid the groundwork for deeper culture conversations later in the semester. My belief was that food could be a jumping off point for difficult conversations. That was part of my curriculum pedagogy.

Students spent several weeks studying restaurant reviews in preparation to write their own. This assignment had been a difficult evolution for me. Idea generation; news judgment, and the writing of stories came easy to me. Students needed a lot of coaching because their experiences with food reviews were the short “yay” or “nay” pieces posted by diners on TripAdvisor, Yelp or Chowhound. I wanted them to know that the restaurant review is largely a consumer piece written to help readers decide if they want to spend their money at that establishment and for what reason they would dine there. Is it a date-night place and dressy? Is it for a casual and quick lunch? And what does the review teach the reader about the cuisine and its place in the community? All that and use descriptive words. And avoid first-person as much as possible. And be confident. And follow journalistic conventions. I had too many expectations and did not give enough guidance. What I finally found most helpful was giving them reviews to read and then having them find the sentences that tell readers what kind of place it was, what type of food they served, and maybe even what they should wear.

Students read two books, one a memoir and all are listed in Appendix A. In 2014, I assigned Ruth Reichl’s *Tender at the Bone* (1998), the book that kick started the contemporary food memoir genre. Reichl chronicled the food revolution in California in the 1980s, which led the way for the farm-to-table movement nationwide. She moved on to become a food critic of the *New York Times* and then the editor of *Gourmet* magazine. She has impressive credentials and is

a seminal figure in modern food journalism. The students had never heard of her. I was a little surprised being that she was such a towering figure in food journalism but through my study I was reminded that while they were keenly interested in food, food writers were largely unfamiliar to them. The analysis of 15 reflections on her book showed they liked it okay and connected mostly with the parts where she talked about what a lousy cook her mother was. They didn't much see themselves in a 50-year-old White woman who had eaten in the best restaurants in the country on an expense account. Between that semester and the next, the faculty in our department went through diversity training. One of the messages that I took away from that training changed the way that I selected reading material. I began to seek out authors of color for all of the assignments, including the required non-fiction book. Since then, the authors have included a Chinese-American woman, a Korean-American man, and three Black men, one of them an immigrant. My analysis of these reflections showed a deeper connection by students to the books' content. Representation via race, ethnicity, gender, age, economic status or even family privilege appeared to make a difference. I now not only seek writers of color who cover issues pertaining to diversity but also food writers of color who write on a variety of topics. Early in my journalism career I wanted to be a sportswriter and was the first female sports editor at my college newspaper in the late 1970s. There were female professional sportswriters at the time but many of them were covering women's sports. I draw parallels here to assigning writers of color only when they write about race and ethnicity and strove to eliminate that inherent segregation.

These assignments were the first building block for the weeks that we studied *Diverse Voices in Food Writing* and *Food Writing as Activism*. Journalism as activism was a leap for them because their ideas of journalism have been strongly shaped by the Internet and the cry of #fakenews that has blared since at least 2015, beating ever louder today. They think of

journalism as being strictly facts presented in an unbiased form, not understanding that it is also about context and history. I taught that journalists want their work to have impact and that can include disparate stories that help people decide whom to vote for and which formula is healthier for their newborns. Educating the public and covering the news is a form of activism and a strong mission for journalists who follow an extensive code of ethics developed by the Society of Professional Journalists. Food journalism can be thought of in the same way, and the many stories in recent years about the ways that food intersects with economics, politics and health show that food writing has impact. The *Tampa Bay Times* food critic was hired in 2019 by the *Washington Post* as its first “business of food” reporter, a recognition of food’s impact on our wallets (Washington Post PR, 2019). These topics were the most challenging for students because they are complex and can be in opposition to their worldviews. In analyzing the data from these assignments, I found their reactions ranged from defiance to surprise to a call to action.

All but one semester of Food Writing was online and the design of the course benefitted from university certification that I earned in online teaching. The training helped me create new types of assignments and rely less on discussions. Putting students into discussion groups is a way to create community but it also promotes “group think.” I provide detailed expectations including an admonishment of “I agree” and “You make a good point” responses in various places on the Canvas course, including the syllabus. But I had to get to this after several semesters of unsatisfying results. I also required them to bring in additional readings or information they have found through research to add deeper meaning. The certification course taught me the value of keeping my video lectures under 15 minutes and sometimes they were less than 10. Short video lectures or messages kept me focused on my point and encouraged

students to listen. The courses were online so that they can be taken by certificate students from anywhere in the country. Graduates student have taken the courses from Florida cities Orlando and Miami, and from Arizona, Michigan and Puerto Rico.

Food in Communication: TV

I designed and taught this online food media course with a television focus in spring 2016 and 2017. The purpose of the course as stated on the syllabus was:

Television is an influential shaper of our worldviews. Because of this, it is rife for critical attention. This class will study the effects of TV programming on our relationship with food. Sitcoms, food-centric travel shows, the vast selection of cooking programs, and more, influence the way we think about food (sic). At the end of this course, students will have a better understanding of the history of food on TV and how the social climate of different eras affect what we see on TV. In addition, they will be aware that what we see on TV affects our attitudes and ultimately influences eating, buying and dining habits.

The topics and material in this class were focused on these weekly topics: TV Kitchens; Thanksgiving and Sitcoms; *Seinfeld*, the Show about Food; Food on Travel Shows; Extreme Food; What We Know About Culture from TV Food Shows; TV and the Family Table; Iconic TV Food ... Krabby Patty Anyone?; Evolution of TV Cooking Shows; Cooking as Competitive Entertainment; TV Chefs in Hot Water and Verbal Wars; What We Know about Cooking from TV; The *SNL* Food Files.

The fun-sounding weekly topics belied the serious issues I intended to present. During the TV Chefs in Hot Water and Verbal Wars week, we talked about the fall of Food Network's Paula Deen after it was revealed she had made racially offensive remarks. This led to a discussion about why male TV food shows hosts, such as Gordon Ramsay and Anthony

Bourdain, were given a pass with their salty (though maybe not racist) language. Throughout the work, the cult of Bourdain, who committed suicide in 2018, was strong. He was mentioned in many assignments mostly because he was known through his shows on the Food Network, Travel Channel and CNN that could be accessed via digital platforms, including YouTube. For many students, and other devoted viewers, Bourdain represented an anti-celebrity chef. He was classically trained and well traveled, but also foul mouthed and more about his worn leather jacket than the pristine chef's coat. During the "What We Know about Culture" week students considered the prevalent portrayal of Chinese restaurants on sitcom and even how the same Chinese-American actor guest starred in multiple shows. It seemed to some of the students that James Hong was the only actor in Hollywood who could portray characters in Chinese restaurants.

Each week students watched either full episodes of TV shows or video clips and engaged in discussions with their groups. They also wrote (1) a research paper about food on TV that highlighted a trend, a subset of shows or a personality; (2) a report on a TV cooking show that was guided by the required book *From Scratch: Inside the Food Network* by Allen Salkin, and (3) a reflection on a gender or diversity issue they discovered. One example of this was a report about how the female hosts of Food Network shows are almost always in street clothes (no aprons) in home settings and the male hosts often wear chef jackets and are either in outdoor spaces (grilling) or commercial kitchens.

This course mixed culture studies and media, if not exactly journalism. The analysis of their work showed that they were already moving away from traditional TV, especially cable, and finding programming on the Internet or through streaming platforms such as Netflix or even YouTube. The focus and intent of this course was not as sharp as the others owing to the fact that

my specialty is food journalism. We drifted away from that here. The selected coursework remained worthy of study because of the food media-student connection and the application of educational criticism and connoisseurship.

Food in Communication: Food Podcasts

I designed and taught the food podcasting course for the spring semesters, 2018 and 2019. The purpose of this class as outlined on the syllabuses:

Topics in Food Communication: Podcasts will introduce students to the broad genre of food-related podcasts. Not only will students be exposed to the many voices talking about food, drink and culture in the digital space, but also they will learn the essential ingredients in creating a podcast. The purpose of this course is to broaden horizons on what food/drink means to culture and how we are able to learn more about each other through this democratic form of digital communication. The bar is low to start a podcast. But a good one? That takes some effort. Students will see this as they listen to a variety of podcasts over the semester.

The weekly topics showed that the curriculum is a mix of listening to assigned podcasts and technology. The salient weekly topics: The Monster Podcasts (award-winning efforts); Getting Starting Techwise; Content, Shmontent – How Are You Going to Get them to Listen?; Wine, Spirits and Craft Brew; Getting Serious: News, Science and Environment (2018); Travel by Podcast (2018); Pod Save Diversity (2019); Cooking: Podcast Check In, and the Southern Table. There were two weeks where students focused on the production of their podcasts and to create this time I eliminated the Getting Serious topics from 2018 and embedded the material into other weeks.

The intended curriculum for the semester was short video lectures by me; how-to videos on creating podcasts from outside sources and a slate of podcasts that they were required to listen so that they could participate in discussion groups. The podcasts featured various styles from classic radio storytelling with on location interviews and a variety of audio features to two people chatting on a topic to complicated product tastings with multiple speakers. My goal was to acquaint them to the styles of radio on demand. Just like with Food Writing, I assigned podcasts that featured diversity topics. Some of the students who took Food Writing also took the podcast class and I was cognizant of that. This discouraged me from repeating general topics and/or authors and hosts. For example, Francis Lam hosts the podcast *Splendid Table* on Minnesota Public Radio. Lam is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and his work has appeared in numerous national publications. He contributed to the column called “Eat” in the *New York Times Magazine*. I avoided his written work in Food Writing so that students could study his work through a different lens. *Splendid Table* was launched in 1997 on the radio and it was more important to me that students learn about this venerable show rather than read Lam’s work. There were many other writers to choose from.

Besides the discussions, assignments included a written report in which they find a podcast and dissect it. I wanted them to tell me about the podcast subject, the intended audience, what kind of social media following it had, and why they think it worked or didn’t. They were also asked to contact the host for an interview. They were successful with this only about 25 percent of the time and mostly because they picked popular podcasts with well-known hosts. Those hosts were less likely to grant interviews to students. The detailed checklist for this assignment helped them as they planned their own podcast. The other written assignment studied

was a reflection on a podcast that considered gender roles and/or diversity. I did not assign this in 2019 and added a written assessment of their podcast project.

Listening to food podcasts and then creating one gave the course the heft that the Food on TV class lacked. I wanted them to take away beginning audio skills that they would be able to use in the future, even if for another topic. I focused my instructional efforts on content rather than the technical aspects for several reasons. Students already knew a lot about digital production platforms either from other classes or from work they produced on their own. They had a variety of equipment (and budget) for recording and editing. Some recorded their 15-minute episodes on their phones and others had professional quality microphones connected to their computers. If they had iPhones and Macs, they used the Audacity editing platform. If they were android and PC users, they gravitated toward Garage Band. They uploaded their finished projects to either iTunes or YouTube or sent a file to me through Canvas. All this was figured out without me. I worked with those who had technology challenges or found someone who could if I was unable to help. This happened only a few times. My philosophy, grounded in the guidance of Dewey, is that there was no point spending a lot of time teaching about a specific platform when they come and go quickly. In just a few years, Premier supplanted the dominant video-editing platform Final Cut Pro that was used in every newsroom and TV station in the country. Video and editing capabilities of smartphones have gotten so good that quality videos are often created there. Technology constantly changes and most undergraduates are used to that. They adapt quickly. However, creating content through research, mastering interviewing plus developing a sense of newsworthiness transcend technology. This was another place that my connoisseurship was utilized.

The name “podcast” gave these audio reports and stories a new shine. Radio sounded old-fashioned. My selection of podcasts for the class also benefitted from my interest and involvement in food media outside of the classroom. I learned about new podcasts and noteworthy episodes of established ones through social media channels. I wanted them to consume a variety of topics that ranged from cooking to social commentary to humor to boozy chatting. The design of this class was based on my belief that they would be more engaged by creating rather than just listening and reflecting.

Coding Efforts

I had not read the coursework from any of the classes since I initially graded it and some of it was five years old. It was all still attainable though Canvas, the learning management system used by the university. My first job was to whittle the thousands of pieces of coursework to an appropriate data set. Which of their work would get me closer to answering my study questions? For Food Writing, I looked at assignments that were the same each semester, which included the end-of-semester assessment, the non-fiction book reflection and personal food essay. The same was done for the Food in Communication courses. My memory led me to believe that the assignments about culture, social trends and diversity and inclusion would reveal the most about the enacted curriculum and untaught lessons. The assignments that make up the data set are listed in Appendix B.

After selecting the coursework to be analyzed, I copied it from Canvas, excising student names where I could and created computer files for each assignment set. I printed data for the Food Writing classes so I had the work in two places and could jot impressions as I re-read it. I abandoned this technique mostly because of my terrible handwriting and a lack of physical space to spread it all out. With 800 pieces of work, I couldn’t image (or afford) the Post-It Notes that I

would go through. As I started my analysis journey, the global pandemic forced me from my university office and into quarantine at home. My access to a printer and other technology conveniences was cut off, as was the ability to go to the university or public library or an office supply business to use these services. For the Food in Communication class data, I relied on two laptops, reading from one and jotting my observations on another. This system was satisfactory and in the end saved paper and the different procedures did not affect my progress or ability to assess the material. In fact, the computer search component made it easier to find examples to include in this chapter. The observation jottings for each class, along with the codes I found plus comments in narrative form that will be used for Chapter Five discussion are found in their raw form in Appendix D and Appendix E. Including this raw material contributed to the trustworthiness of my study.

I devised the deductive codes using my recollected impressions, and also the direction of the literature review about the ways in which the study of food can have impact because of relevance to students and their interest in food and drink. The codes fell into values and emotions labels, and it was the like ideas expressed by the students that drew my attention. While there were other things that came to the fore, like the 128 times one assignment elicited excited exclamation points or the 15 times in 18 essays that the words “Asian” and “Chinese” were used interchangeably, I did not feel they were helping to answer my study questions. I noted them in my observations however. The deductive codes were Relationships, Food Interest, Food Writing/Food Media, Expectations, Discovery, Confusion, Surprise.

I developed the inductive codes as I re-read the coursework. Many of them came out in the first-stage reading because I was jotting my observations as I went. I could see after reading just a few pieces of work in the Food Writing class that there was enthusiasm for the topic and

individual assignments; they tackled assignments with passion and conviction. It was also clear that preconceived notions by students were prominent in all classes on all topics. They thought food writing was about recipes, cookbooks and restaurants. They didn't think memoirs were something they would like to read. They thought it would be dull to listen to people they couldn't see; radio shows = boring. I saw clearly that their worldviews contributed to their reactions to the curriculum, helping me to address my second study question about what students experienced from the curriculum. I also noted the many times that students expressed their support and convictions toward social justice movements and concepts. I named this code "call to action." The inductive codes created from topics that surfaced as I read the work became Call to Action, Storytelling, Connection, Defiance, Confidence, Enthusiasm, Preconceived Notions, Group Think, Sophistication, Technology/Technique, Media Familiarity.

This was a qualitative study that focused on my assessment and interpretation of what students experienced from the curriculum I developed for the three food media courses. I have not quantified how many times the codes appeared in specific pieces of work for specific courses and semesters. Indeed that could tell a tale, but I chose to focus on value-laden and emotional interactions to the assignments by students combined with my visceral responses to their work. The inductive code "confidence" is better discussed with examples over numbers. I discovered this code by noting the multiple times students wrote with assuredness in assignments. They rarely doubted their convictions. Putting a number on this was not particularly illuminating other than to say it was a lot. Quantitative methods would have been beneficial mixed with qualitative techniques had I employed in vivo coding. My data set plus a mixed methods analysis could be fodder for study about the writing itself or as an essay on this generation's love affair with the exclamation point. I address opportunity for further study in Chapter 5. Also, as a program

evaluation that leaned heavily on educational criticism and connoisseurship, the narrative was more crucial than the numbers.

Deductive Codes and Examples

This section includes my deductive codebook and examples of how those codes manifested in the student work. Note: I corrected grammar, punctuation and misspellings in the examples because I did not want them to distract from their exemplary value in relation to the codes. Where a word necessary for comprehension was missing, I added it in brackets. If I had elected to study the mechanics of the writing, I would have highlighted the issues with the writing. Places where I deleted parts of the quote material are indicated with ellipses.

Relationships

Example 1, Personal Food Essay, Food Writing, 2014:

My mom's sister lives just a stone's throw away from us in Orlando (my parents' house is nearby in Tampa) so we seem to get roped into driving there for Christmas Day quite frequently. My mom won't admit it, but there's a little bit of sibling rivalry between her and our Aunt Kathleen, and the rest of us think that's why she always seems to get a little extra joy out of hearing her dishes are the best. She denies it of course, but we are all a competitive bunch.

Example 2, *Tender at the Bone* reflection, Food Writing, 2014:

Reading Reichl's book made me realize [what] food was like when I was growing up. My mother was nothing like Reichl's mother. She did not have a disorder and her cooking was not bad. However, I could relate to the leftovers left in the refrigerator until (they were) moldy. My mother's cooking would consist of mixing whatever she could find in the refrigerator together to make dinner.

Example 3, Personal Food Essay, Food Writing, Fall 2017:

Our meal desperation wasn't a secret. Apparently, my girlfriend spoke to her mom on the phone and mentioned as much. Her motherly suggestion was to create a meal using pesto, something that neither of us had ever cooked with before. I had so many questions. Was it a spice? A paste? What could we put it on? Eager to give it a go, we set a slab of salmon to thaw while we discussed what this new meal would be like. One different dinner might not seem like anything to get excited about, but the change in pace made all the difference for us.

Food Interest

Example 1, Personal Food Essay, Food Writing, Fall 2015:

All I can remember is that every day for lunch, my mom would pack me a sandwich, a drink, and a banana. It was at my own request, and I didn't see anything wrong with it, until each lunch period was filled with 'Anna loves bananas!' every time I pulled out the boomerang-shaped, yellow fruit. I tried to ignore it, I really did. I tried to focus on how sweet it was, and how it filled me up and was good for me (because my mom said so), but then everyone that sat at our lunch table joined in.

Example 2, Personal Food Essay, Food Writing, Fall 2015:

Surstromming is not for the weak of heart of stomach. It is translated from Swedish to "sour herring," and if you're expecting that to be a poor translation, and something to be misinterpreted, sorry, but you're wrong. It is exactly what it sounds like, wretched and fuming of baby poop, raw sewage and the garbage you forgot to take out of your kitchen when you left on vacation for three weeks. Disgusting.

Example 3, Personal Food Essay, Food Writing, Spring 2017:

This was the first time I cooked a whole chicken before. My experience only involved chicken breast and wings, nothing else. My impatience took over every inch of my body and I kept wanting to check the internal temperature in the chicken's thigh. I checked so many times, the skin attaching the leg and the breast disconnected. I also had trouble reading the thermometer, but I thought it's better safe than be sorry and stuck it back in the oven. ... I tried to be more patient this time, and did not check on the food until I smelled something burning.

Food Writing/Food Media

Example 1, Diversity in Food Writing Response, Food Writing, Fall 2018:

This article is still about food, it just isn't talking about why it's delicious or where to find it. It takes a look at the people who make it and the struggles they deal with on a daily basis. I think it's important to have journalistic writing and food writing intersect because there are social and political issues in everything! ... It makes me think about the video lecture and how it was pointed out that in one case, people were being kept in cages to help harvest shrimp. That's insane! It's those sort of things we, the consumers, would never know about if journalistic writing and food writing didn't intersect.

Example 2: End-of-Semester Assessment, Food Writing, Fall 2017:

One of the things I found to be extremely interesting while taking this class this semester, is how much work actually goes into food writing. It was cool to see how involved food writers are in multiple aspects of their pieces. Not only do they try the food, attempt recipes multiple times to perfect it, and take great aesthetically pleasing images, but they also have to have good writing skills that make you want to read their articles.

Example 3, Research Paper Proposal, Food in Communication (TV), Spring 2016:

After having been in this course for the past month or so, I found the topic on food not to be a simple conversation after all. In television, specifically, and its tendencies on portraying its contents in certain lights, food can be both influential and informative in its presentation. I found that it provides history, opens doors to invite new conversations for viewers, and can even impact an audience negatively.

Expectations

Example 1: End-of-Semester Assessment, Food Writing, Fall 2017:

I honestly took this class because I thought it was writing for food blogs! Even though it wasn't necessarily what I expected, I really did like learning about the different aspects of food writing. It made me appreciate what I was reading a lot more.

Example 2: End-of-Semester Assessment, Food Writing, Fall 2019:

I took this course to see how journalism expanded outside of a newsroom or reporting live on television through news platforms, and I learned how journalism consisted of so much more.

Example 3: Pod Save Diversity Discussion, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts),
Spring, 2019:

This week, we had to listen to a lot of podcasts that were related to serious topics about diversity and the politics of our nation. All of them were really entertaining and I learned something that I never really would have thought about when I thought of podcast. For some reason, I thought podcasts were always just a fun conversation but learned that it could actually be something that can shine a new light on something that's been neglected.

Discovery

Example 1, Pod Save Diversity Discussion, Food Writing, 2019:

As I'm involved in social justice activism, I chose to write about the article with the Black Lives Matter co-founder. I found my interest and curiosity piqued by the title — I had never heard anyone say that activism began in the kitchen. Culture and history, yes. But activism wasn't a word I'd connect with food and cooking. However, as I dived deep into the article, I realized that it makes sense. Food has historically been used as a political and activist tool. Even on college campuses, people hand out baked good and snacks with little flyers attached to it, either as a means to bring awareness to an issue they're marketing or to market themselves for some sort of campaign (i.e., homecoming queen or king).

Example 2, End-of-Semester Assessment, Food Writing, Fall 2016:

I chose to take this class for many reasons, it was online, it seemed interesting, I liked the professor ... but I never realized how powerful food writing could be as a journalist. I thought that food writing was simply restaurant critiques, but it is actually so much more. I think I began to love food writing when I realized that I could be opinionated and descriptive. The lack of personal voice is what turned me off of journalism for a while. All news stories seemed “newsworthy,” but they felt dead to me while I was reading them. I didn't want to be that kind of writer.

Example 3, Travel by Podcast, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts), Spring 2018:

I am a major goat lover – and non meat eater – so, the first episode was really eye opening to me. We forget that people live lives outside of our bubbles. There's nothing wrong with it we get wrapped up in our own narratives of how things should be. It's

comfortable. We often choose not to try new things because it is daunting, or uncomfortable. It is in the discomfort that we grow and expand our horizons.

Confusion

Example 1, Food Appropriation Discussion, Food Writing, Fall 2018:

A White girl with puffy, pouty lips, wearing pink clip-in extensions is “edgy” and “fashionable” while a Black girl doing something very similar is “ghetto” and “extra.”

Example 2: Diversity Webinar Discussion, Food Writing, Fall 2016:

I never truly considered the concept of “cultural theft.” We hear the term “cultural appropriation” often, but I did not consider this to be relevant in the area of food.

However, I understand where the author is coming from in this topic. It gets murky when the chef may be from that specific culture. I believe that if someone grew up in a culture, even if they are not from the original country, they have this right to be an expert. I do believe that anyone can write about any foods, but I don’t think they should be considered an expert in that area. They studied under experts, but they will never have that first hand knowledge.

Example 3, Culture Discussion, Food in Communication (TV), Spring 2017:

I agree that the MadTV clip was hard to watch at times. I had to stop the clip halfway through and wait a minute before restarting. It was painful to watch. The way that cultures and foods are depicted on television definitely has a lot to do with the producers. It is unlikely they have all experienced the cultures they are emulating in their programs, and they have to assume stereotypes are correct which pushes these problems along.

Surprise

Example 1, *Fortune Cookie Chronicles* Reflection, Food Writing, Fall 2015:

What surprised me most about her book was that it read like a narrative. I think I was expecting the book to be just facts, which could get redundant and boring. However, the book was filled with interesting anecdotes that made the book fun and easy to read.

Example 2, Diversity Food Writing Response, Food Writing, Fall 2018:

I chose this article because of the first sentence that read “in between stories about cooking and cultural trends, I now spend my days reporting about sexism, sexual abuse and harassment in the food world.” It caught me very off guard. Food writing and sexism seem like two things that do not go together, so it definitely caught my attention and made me want to learn more.

Example 3, End-of-Semester Assessment, Food Writing, Fall 2107:

The most interesting part of this class for me was learning about the many different ways writers approach different aspects of food writing. ... I feel as though a class such as this shows an up-and-coming writer that there are many different ways to approach a story, and putting your own spin and personality into it makes for a better overall product. ...

Overall this class has helped me develop my writing style while also showing me a different aspect to food writing as a whole.

Inductive Codes and Examples

This section includes my inductive codebook and examples of how those codes manifested in the student work. Note: Just as I did with deductive code examples, I corrected grammar, punctuation and misspellings because I do not want them to distract from their exemplary value in relation to the codes. Where a word necessary for comprehension was

missing, I added it in brackets. If I had elected to study the mechanics of the writing, I would have highlighted the issues with the writing. Places where I deleted parts of the quote material are indicated with ellipses.

Call to Action

Example 1, Diversity Webinar Discussion, Food Writing, Fall 2016:

The quote “If we can’t sit at the table, we will knock the legs off of it” by Michael Twitty really sums up the message of the week. I believe he means that if we cannot sit down to understand other cultures in the realm of food and be open minded we will undermine the melting pot society that we were founded on. We have to learn from each other to advance as a whole. Without the willingness to be open and learn and grow from one another nothing will be accomplished. If we are not willing to come together then we might as well be apart.

Example 2, Podcast Diversity Report, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts), Spring 2018:

Food memories are amazing ways to show diversity. African Americans have had to overcome barriers in the culinary world. Like people assuming that everyone who is black like sweet potato pie and can/want to only cook soul food. White audiences also didn’t accept Black chefs so easily. “In the singing world, people are so drawn to me, but in the cooking world, people are slowly coming around,” Patti Labelle [says]. She also gives some recipes to help women going through menopause. This helps to bring together women through food.

Example 3, End-of-Semester Assessment, Food Writing, Fall 2019:

Kwame Onwuachi's ambition to be a chef can be summarized in his words "I'm cooking for all the people, and to tell all the stories, told and untold, remembered and forgotten" (Onwuachi, 2019, Page 9). I wrote this in my reflection piece, and it is a quote that has stuck with me throughout all of my papers and writing courses. We are writing for the people and should write as a means for people to gain something to better themselves and the community.

Storytelling

Example 1, Personal Food Essay, Food Writing, 2018:

I paused for a moment to tame my enthusiasm, and shortly after catching my breath I broke down in tears. I cried because I wanted my mom to experience a meal so delicious and fresh instead of something frozen that was cooked in the microwave. I cried because she deserved a meal that great for everything she had done for me, helping me escape the toxic environment that was home, which easily could have corrupted my character as time went on. Then I cried even harder because I couldn't share a meal like that with her, and I wanted to so bad but I was sure to make myself a promise that night. I promised that as soon as I had enough money to cover the tab, I was going to take my mom to Bonefish Grill and we would share a great meal together.

Example 2: Personal Food Essay, Food Writing, 2019:

I still remember his frail frame bent over the kitchen island, brows furrowed in concentration. His dark brown hands worked quickly, informal but with a marked degree of expertise – familiarity. The rhythmic chopping of the onions cut through the awkward silence that engulfed not only him, but myself, my mother, both of my older sisters, and

the wife he had brought along with him. When he finished with the finely chopped onion, he sauntered over to the pantry, landing on two packets of short, angel-hair thin noodles.

Example 3, Personal Food Essay, Food Writing, Fall 2015:

There were topless beautiful girls swinging around poles. Rich businessmen were spending cash like I had never seen before, when my date ordered me the most expensive lobster on the menu. I assume he thought this would impress me, or impress the other men, I don't know. I was too busy worrying about how to explain that I don't eat seafood.

Connection

Example 1, The Southern Table Discussion, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts), Spring 2019:

I'm taking a Civil Rights Movement class and I hadn't heard about this side of the movement, the hostesses. I think this is really fascinating too!

Example 2, End-of-Semester Assessment, Food Writing, Fall 2017:

Using descriptive words was a challenge for me at first. From this class, I have improved in not only food writing but all communication and storytelling since I now know how to use descriptive words. It is something I notice when other people are telling stories and I hold myself back from asking "I know it is good, but what do you mean by good?"

Example 3, Podcast Diversity Report, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts), Spring 2018:

Elements of diversity range from who we are and where we come from, to what we eat and why. I enjoyed this podcast enough to listen multiple times, and even played it for my own mother to hear.

Defiance

Example 1, Food Appropriation Discussion, Food Writing, Fall 2018:

I had honestly never heard the term “food appropriation” before this week’s readings, and now that I have, I think it’s ridiculous. Can a Mexican-American cook Chinese food? Sure. Can an average white man cook Greek foods? Absolutely. I think that the whole concept of appropriation has gotten completely out of hand, but since I’m white, I don’t really get an opinion on that. Stereotyping is wrong, obviously, and the article about an ethnic restaurant needing to be “ugly” or “dirty” outside is ridiculous. But calling an ethnic restaurant ethnic isn’t some deep-seeded (sic) crime.

Example 2: End-of-Semester Assessment, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts),

Spring 2019:

I found myself zoning off at some points in the podcasts because I like entertaining podcasts and food is not really something that interests me. I think I would rather eat the food than hear about it. ... I wouldn’t want to (do a podcast about) food because explaining food is not what I am interested in. ... Yes, there were podcasts that we listened to that had jokes and a funny feel to it but not all of them. I want to be able to laugh, joke around and just talk about stuff.

Example 3, Culture Discussion, Food in Communication (TV), Spring 2016:

I lived in China for six months a few years ago. ... I hear a lot of people say things like “Chinese people wouldn’t even recognize American Chinese food,” or make comments about how much different Chinese food is in China. But from my experience, the food in China wasn’t THAT different. There were a lot of the same dishes that we eat here in America. I wasn’t in a city that sees a lot of tourism from Western countries, but every

restaurant that I went to had forks and spoons on hand for people that were not comfortable using chop sticks, which was contrary to what I had heard a lot in the states, that in China they only eat with chop sticks.

Confidence

Example 1, TV Chefs in Hot Water Discussion, Food in Communication (TV), Spring 2016:

OK, well, we all know that I scream that I am from New York and New Jersey as loud and often as I can. It's kind of my "shtick." Living in the south has been quite a culture shock for me on numerous occasions, mainly because of my own mouth, I suppose.

Gordon Ramsay never bothers me, and Jersey Boy Bourdain feels like family. So this week's questions leave me scratching my head. ... I am baffled as to why people would ever be offended by their language or mannerisms. LOL.

Example 2, Travel by Podcast Discussion, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts), Spring 2018:

The Goats, Gods, and Garlic podcast was great to me! ... The Nepalese dishes he was describing, like the fried goat for example, sounded mouthwatering. That was different for me. Goats are one of my favorite animals, and it isn't particularly common to eat them here. It was intriguing to hear the ways they would obtain the meats and prepare them. Being able to learn Nepalese dishes from someone who is native to the land would be a great way to be an "armchair traveler." Food can transport you around the world just by your taste buds.

Example 3: TV Chefs in Hot Water Discussion, Food in Communication (TV), Spring 2017:

This might sound a little cliché, but why can't we all just be nice to each other?! I do think in this world we live in, for whatever reason, we love drama and especially watching the drama unfolds before our eyes. So to watch things such as Paula Deen's racist comment drama, us Americans love it! Most wouldn't agree with what the actual controversy was about, but instead we're more in awe about how she will be charged and what will happen next in her career.

Enthusiasm

Example 1, *The Cooking Gene* Reflection, Food Writing, Fall 2017:

Out of all the books that I read this semester, I think that *The Cooking Gene* by Michael Twitty was the by far the best as it was well written and intriguing to read. His beautiful language and prose sucked [me] into the book, and suddenly five hundred pages really did not seem that daunting. Some of my favorite highlights from the book were: how he wrote about food, how he used food to navigate complex ideas, and how he smoothly navigated through different topics.

Example 2: Diversity Food Writing Response, Food Writing, Fall 2018:

Overall, I'm happy I read this article because I love supporting people everywhere! Love is love and food is amazing! I love how this article spread awareness on not just female chefs but different identities in the kitchen. No matter the gender, if you have talent and you want to be in the kitchen, by all means take the tools and go for it! I love to empower females and I strongly believe that if you have what it takes, then give it your all, even in the kitchen!

Example 3: Food Appropriation Discussion Response, Food Writing, Fall 2018:

I AM HONESTLY CLAPPING. In real life. At my computer. Everything. JUST EVERYTHING YOU WROTE. I felt like I was trying to describe the feeling that you expressed but had no idea how to without sounding like a piece of trash.

Preconceived notions

Example 1, End-of-Semester Assessment, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts), Spring, 2018:

Before learning about podcasts/podcasting, I never understood how listeners could be entertained by just “hearing” the audio and not seeing the people speaking. In other words, I am someone who turns off the radio if the hosts are just talking, and there isn’t music playing. I also tend to turn off the TV or radio during commercial breaks, because I get bored hearing people talk.

Example 2, *The Cooking Gene* reflection, Food Writing, Fall 2017:

Never before would I have thought of using food as a guide to track my ancestors. Solely eating my cultural food seemed like enough for myself to get the idea of who I am. Twitty has taught me to take it a step further and not only eat how my ancestors did, but prepare the food how they once did.

Example 3, End-of-Semester Assessment, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts), Spring 2019:

I definitely couldn’t find any podcasts that were interesting to me either before this class. I would just browse through and not really be able to listen and appreciate the podcasts.

Sophistication

Example 1, Podcast Diversity Report, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts, Spring 2018:

The most touching moment of the episode, and perhaps the most touching thing I have listened to in this class, was when Juanita Abernathy, the wife of a friend and partner of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., defended herself and let the world know that she was not just the cook, and would not be pigeonholed as so. I heard the age, wisdom, experience, and anger in her voice as she told us, “I’m not just a cook. I’m not a home ec major.”

Example 2, TV Chefs in Hot Water Discussion, Food in Communication (TV), Spring 2016:

An action packed violent movie can be watched in context and not make you cringe at the first sign of anything unpleasant. When this abrasive and “In your face” sort of demeanor is pushed into the realm of TV reality, it becomes not as accepted and irritating. I think that certain people embrace the hardcore demeanor of Gordon Ramsay and rough attitude of Bourdain, but it definitely is not universally accepted. Personally, I do not care for these rough styles of entertainment, but entertainment is a relative term. Everyone likes something different.

Example 3, Diversity Reflection, Food in Communication (TV), Spring, 2017:

In Rachel Ray’s other show, *30 Minute Meals*, she always has one or more of the same three themes: Date night, kid friendly or entertainment. Although Ray does not have children, she always tries to mention tips on how to get your kids more interested in being in the kitchen or making food that your kids will love. During the show, she always

is giggly, and uses girlish languages, which help make her seem more comfortable to the male viewers. This is part of the “food porn” movement, which hypersexualizes food.

Technology/Technique

Example 1, The Southern Table Discussion, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts),
Spring 2019:

Sounds and music add personality, and they help the audience imagine what’s going on.

An example of this is when the speaker began talking about how she sang a song in jail in “Hostesses of the Movement.” We then hear a song in the background, and assume this is the song she sang. In the episode “Agave Diplomacy,” when the speaker talks about margaritas, we hear the shaker in the background which is a fun add-in. I love how *Gravy* uses music as a tool to transition between topics throughout each episode. I noticed that the music used usually corresponds to what the episode is about.

Example 2: End-of-Semester Assessment, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts),
Spring 2018:

I think just having the knowledge of how to make, record, and publish a podcast is good to have in our back pockets, we can make a podcast about any subject we’re interested in now.

Example 3, The Southern Table Discussion, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts),
Spring 2018:

The style of storytelling was very different in “Baptism by Biryani.” Instead of starting off with an introduction of a point in history, it starts off with a focus on food and its description. Throughout the podcast there is a narrative with background audio that includes sounds, quotes and components that support what is being said by the narrator. I

think this makes the story more relatable and it puts you into the scene. I liked that the narrator moved the story forward by introducing statements made by the person being interviewed and it helped bring more details.

Group Think

There are many examples of this throughout the discussions. Once the first person sets the tone, few students offer anything new or disagree. I only include two examples in this code category because Example 2 represents the more than 20 more discussions that are similar in their congenial responses from students.

Example 1, Food Appropriation Discussion, Food Writing, 2017:

When one student expressed defiance over the concept of cultural/food appropriation, her discussion group mates voiced solidarity. “I agree that it does seem a bit ridiculous that certain people are restricted to cooking certain foods;” “I don’t think anybody should be ashamed or discouraged from cooking whatever they want to cook whenever they want to cook it;” “I agree with you when you make the point that if someone does not like a white man cooking Mexican food, they can find a different restaurant.”

Example 2, The Southern Table Discussion, Food in Communication (Food Podcasts), Spring 2018:

One student responding to other posts in her group used these phrases to open her remarks about the storytelling in the *Gravy* podcast from Southern Foodways at University of Mississippi: “I think you are spot on ...;” “I agree ...,” and “I second that.”

Media familiarity

This code was mostly apparent in Food in Communication with a television focus as students wrote about others shows they liked, including those they watched on the Internet.

Example 1, Research Paper Proposal, Food in Communication (TV), Spring, 2017:

For this research paper, I am going to focus on the reality television programs *Bar Rescue* and *Kitchen Nightmares*, hosted by John (sic) Taffer and Gordon Ramsay, respectively.

These shows focus on helping revitalize failing food establishments. My main focus will be on each show's impact on the specific establishments they help, the audience reception and how the respective hosts' backgrounds in hospitality have affected their programs.

Example 2, Research Paper Proposal, Food in Communication (TV), Spring, 2016:

I want to do my research paper on two shows that I watched since I was younger probably in 5th grade, *Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations* and *Bizarre Foods* by Andrew Zimmern. I think that these are the two shows that inspired me to think outside of the box when it came to food, and always left me wanting for more.

Example 3, Research Paper Proposal, Food in Communication (TV), Fall 2016:

For this paper, I was thinking about a content analysis of a show called *F*ck, That's Delicious*. It's a show posted on Vice, an Internet website known for posting world news in a style that appeals to the millennial generation. The show features a man named Action Bronson. ... He travels the world and eats the finest foods, even cooks as he goes. ... Being a rapper, he runs the show with a hip-hop feel but also includes all types of music. Bronson brings great humor to the show that gives the show more appeal.

In this chapter, I have explained how my connoisseurship of food writing, food media and food journalism imbues the curriculum for the courses studied in this program evaluation. The development of the deductive and inductive codes was explained. Lastly, to exemplify the codes I included several dozen examples via direct quotes of student work, the detail of their words bringing texture to the data. All the while writing this chapter I had to continually remind

myself to be disciplined and save discussion of results for Chapter Five as it became clear that my continuing education was affecting theirs and that the untaught lessons showed the worthy place food has in college curricula. It was not easy. Patterns and connections, successes and failures danced seductively.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The study of food journalism and food media forged a strong connection with university students. A statement as bold and definitive as that required a caveat: To make that connection, it was desirable to have a connoisseur, a food journalism Sherpa if you will, to guide them up the mountain of media on the topic. My evaluation of the coursework in 10 semesters of university food writing and food media courses that I taught showed that my sensibilities and experience were strongly intertwined in the curriculum. What I learned about what they learned affirmed that they mostly experienced what I intended, but it was the untaught lessons where the revelation was revealed. The untaught lessons were both theirs and mine. It would never have occurred to me as a teacher to return to coursework from five years ago, or even one year ago, but having done so as a doctoral student, I saw that that the courses impacted the student experience in ways other than I intended; ways I hadn't realized mattered.

Start with my rush to judgment on an assignment in which I was unhappy with the results and that I eventually decided had little value. After two semesters, I eliminated a story assignment that required students to visit a local outdoor market, interview a food vendor and write a profile of that person in a journalistic style. I was frustrated because the stories did not adhere to journalistic conventions and were not publishable, an unstated goal of the assignment. As a veteran journalist, I believed a byline was more valuable than a grade. I could not take off my editor's hat nor accept that their lack of experience made them unable to pen a professional-quality, publishable story. The course had no prerequisite journalism class plus not all of the students were mass communication majors. There were students in the classes majoring in

English, pre-nursing, hospitality and a few others were undeclared. I did make the instructions on the assignments more detailed the next semester that I taught the class, but that did not make much difference because I was missing the point: they were not prepared to meet my goal. My disappointment was not reflected in their grades because I realized that their work had to be evaluated commensurately with their experience.

As I re-read the 29 stories written during Fall semesters 2014 and 2015, it was apparent that the experience was valuable to them. The stories remained unpublishable without extensive editing but Dewey's concept of "collateral learning" (1938) came to the fore. For many students, it was their first trip to an outdoor market and they learned more about their communities. Most gravitated to vendors who were raising money for causes or whose food had a cultural connection (knishes, halal beef jerky, Mexican market fare, Italian pastries, Belgian waffles from a family recipe, New Orleans cuisine). In this instance, they were able to control the assignment and that choice gave them power to select a vendor who sold something they were drawn to (or that the vendor was friendly and willing to talk). They were invested. They got practice talking with someone they didn't know and not in a superficial way. They had to ask questions and take notes or record the interview. And then put those answers into order for a story. I failed to see the value of these experiences, likely because of my newness as a university instructor. I was focused on the end product and not the journey that sort-of got them there. This was clear when I revisited the stories. Though my connoisseurship was crucial to the curriculum of these classes, it also got in the way sometimes and this was one example.

I noticed this on another assignment when I assumed that a phrase familiar in culinary food studies would be well-known to the students. The Southern Table was a weekly topic in the Food in Communication podcast courses Spring 2018 and 2019. Students did not answer the part

of the discussion prompt that asked: “Did you learn something new about Southern food culture? If so, what?” As I analyzed their work, it became clear that even though they lived in the quasi-South and most were natives, the food culture of the South was not something that they knew much about in an academic way. By quasi-South I mean that most students were from Florida which is geographically a Southern state but that depending on where they were from, such as Miami, Tampa and Orlando, the local culinary scene may have stronger Hispanic influences. I needed to provide readings about Southern food, and especially its relationship to soul food. I assumed that they knew more than they did. The phrase “Southern Table” might work in an article in *Garden & Gun* magazine, but it had little meaning to them.

Eisner’s “What Do Children Learn When They Paint?” served as a navigation tool as I embarked on this evaluation, and the title inspired my own. In his 1978 essay, he outlined the nine consequences that children experience when they put brush to canvas. One of those consequences involved control. The act of making art teaches them that what they create can alter the world, or at least introduce something new to the world. (This is why I have loved both daily newspaper journalism and cooking. It is greatly satisfying to end the day having created something that didn’t exist when the sun rose.) Perhaps that was overstating what the 29 students got from interviewing a food vendor at an outdoor market and then writing a story, but I did see how control over the assignment gave them freedom to write about something that resonated with them. Plus, they used observation skills and for the mass communication majors in the course they wrote with the detail that they felt they couldn’t in assignments in their beginning journalism classes.

One student’s words stood out:

The buzz of the Tuesday Morning Market gave the beach side [city] of Gulfport a cheery glow in the cool, morning sun, a salty breeze lazily blowing in from the nearby water.

Vendors ran down the side of Gulf Boulevard, painting the sidewalks in tents of reds and blues and selling everything between dresses and mini donuts.

Writing muscles were flexed. Many students come to the mass communication program with a love of writing but their writing experience is more about the five-paragraph essay, poetry or short fiction pieces. At the beginning of their journalism education, they struggle with learning to top-load stories with information. The short sentences and paragraphs and the just-the-facts-ma'am construction bother them. The writing assignments in the food courses gave them the opportunity to explore another way to craft a journalism story, and for some this was a revelation. From an end-of-semester assessment, Food Writing 2018: "No longer did I view food writing as simply writing reviews of restaurants and the food they are served (sic), but as a form of journalism that tells stories in ways that are not always conventional but effective."

If Eisner's nine consequences are turned on their heads a bit, they could be used to show what my university students learned when they studied food writing and food media. Sometimes, it was not about creation, like the food vendor story, but more about what they gleaned about the impact of food journalism. In artistic endeavors, Eisner wrote, children learn that what they create can function as symbols. Through various assignments about stories, TV shows and podcasts, students realized that the food that was highlighted was not the main message but rather a symbol for something else: longing, belonging, assimilation, gentrification. The taste of General Tso's chicken was irrelevant, but the many sitcoms that featured Chinese restaurants serving this dish offered symbolic lessons about culture and stereotypes. Wrote one student:

They (TV shows) tend to use the situation of dining out at a Chinese restaurant to make

jokes about stereotypes. This is evident in all the sitcom clips we watched this week. From the dark, ambient lit, red accented décor, to the communication issues with the wait staff, *Seinfeld*, *King of Queens* and *The Big Bang Theory* all used the setting of the Chinese restaurant for cheap laughs.

In first-person essays about food, they overwhelmingly told tales about families, friends and lovers through a special meal or recipe. The food could be auntie's mac-n-cheese, a glass of cheap Chablis, Christmas fruitcake or café con leche sold from a walk-up window in Miami. They were interchangeable as vehicles to describe personal relationships. This also related to Eisner's notion that symbols transport artists, even young ones, somewhere else and that the creation of the symbol requires judgment as part of the image making. In my interpretation of this, I determined that it moved the locus of evaluation from the external to the internal. I saw many examples of this as students were inspired by the assignments to share personal experiences. Discussions of articles about the #metoo movement as manifested in restaurants encouraged confessions. One student wrote of her "fair share" of harassment in her jobs at restaurants. And another, "I work at Outback and people are always sleeping with one person, to sleep with another person or that person cheated with that person, for that person. There is always drama when it comes to sex." That didn't much sound like observations that would be elicited by food writing, and yet it was.

I chose undergraduate work to study because I thought that the students' generally younger ages (19 to 22) meant their life experiences would be narrower. I believed they would not have traveled as much, cooked extensively or been exposed to many cuisines. What was true was that they were not acquainted with seminal food writers such as M.F.K. Fisher, Diana Kennedy, Ruth Reichl and especially Clemetine Paddleford, whose story and derring-do have

mostly been forgotten outside of food journalist circles. (Not to self: Write the screenplay for Paddleford's biopic when dissertation is complete.) Paddleford piloted a plane around the United States from the 1930s through 1950s, chronicling regional cuisines that would eventually become her groundbreaking book, *How America Eats* (1960). The students did not know these writers nor as a group had they traveled extensively. I applied the word "travel" too literally. Their younger (than me) ages made them digital natives. They did not know a time without the Internet or even cell phones. The World Wide Web gave them access to the globe in a personal way. YouTube videos transported them to the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo or to crowded Mumbai with celebrated chef David Chang via his Netflix show *Ugly Delicious*. They had the ability to connect with celebrities and people who lived in other parts of the country and the world through Snapchat and Twitter. While they eschewed the traditional conventions (and bills) of cable TV, streaming platforms Hulu, Netflix and Amazon Prime introduced them to shows such as Eddie Huang's *Huang's World*, Andrew Zimmern's *Bizarre Foods* and Anthony Bourdain's *Part Unknown*. They introduced me to rapper Action Bronson's *F*ck, That's Delicious* series on Viceland. Students had been around without leaving their homes, the world brought to them through a handheld device. It was clear in their reactions to travel/food podcasts, though, that even though they had been around the world virtually, they still longed to experience other places first-hand. This student showed, too, that travel privilege is desirable:

My dream food/travel podcast would be to fly all the different airlines first class while discussing the quality of the food in 1st class and compare them with the other airlines. Getting paid to sit in 1st class recording my eating experience, now that's what I would call the good life.

I had assumed undergraduates didn't have the sophistication brought by experience but I

learned that didn't mean their experiences were not valid, valuable or educational.

They had the opportunity to relate their own experiences with racism and sexism after reading articles about injustices in restaurants, the food chain and even in history. The personal food essay assignment provided a platform to explore relationships with food and people. In Chapter Three, I wrote that I wanted to learn why semester after semester, I was generally disappointed with the essays. I felt they were superficial and got the feeling that the students believed the essays needed to be cheerful pieces. Or earthshaking, groundbreaking. Where were the stories of struggle and going without? Of food desserts and food injustice? I knew that 25 percent of the children growing up in the county where my university is located are described as food insecure because they don't know where their next meal is coming from. This county was not an anomaly in Florida where 1 in 8 adults experience food insecurity along with 1 in 5 children (Feeding America, 2020). Shouldn't those experiences have crept into the work and wasn't it a legitimate assumption that some of the students had experienced clinical hunger? Enlightenment came from evaluating 180 essays. Directly from my raw observations:

I didn't realize until I re-read them how the exercise seemed to be cathartic for many of the students. ... In the run up to the assignment, I didn't draw attention to effective ways to tell stories. Thus, they told them chronologically, often not recognizing that so much of the story was superfluous, even boring. My lecture on Marcel Proust and the Madeleine moment led them to believe it had to be some monumental, sweeping story about their childhoods.

Through this exercise, this assignment was changed for students taking Food Writing in Fall 2020. I directed them to the personal food essays in Eater.com two weeks before their essay was due. They picked one they wanted to read and I asked them to dissect it, noting mostly how

food was used to tell the story and to consider if the food itself was important other than as a symbol. One essay that was selected by several students was about a writer's obsession with the way food was depicted in the anime genre of animation. They shared the link with their small discussion group and got to see what the other students selected, and then they had a conversation. Though those essays were not part of this evaluation, this tweak in the assignment helped them understand the genre better. This was an example of how my education aided their education.

“Group Think” was an inductive code devised to pinpoint where students mostly agreed with one another in discussions. Once one student set the tone for the discussion, others followed. I tried over the semesters to push them toward more robust conversation, mostly by giving them detailed instruction about what I expected. Overall, they did bring in outside sources and had constructive back and forth, but there was still a tendency for the group to agree. I came to terms with the fact that there were limitations on this type of online assignment. Or at least limitations in terms of what I wanted them to do. What did I want them to do? This study caused me to think more about this but I have yet to come to a satisfactory conclusion about my motives. My goals were unclear even to me. Noddings (2012) was referring to face-to-face classes of younger students when she wrote that when students work in small groups teachers “may listen, remind them to treat each other with respect, make small suggestions, and even join the dialogue” (p. 774). I believe there is application of this at the college level, especially the idea of joining the dialogue. I did not do that, but rather chimed in when they were finished as I graded the assignment. Joining their online conversations, just like I did in the classroom, could have encouraged more points of view. I wondered, were the small group discussions busy work to them? Did I put too much pressure on this type of assignment to take the place of the

classroom? Would jumping in take away control and make them think they had to agree with me? More thought on my part was needed to determine how I wanted them to experience the assignment.

The work done in the discussion assignments don't necessarily jibe with Eisner's consequence that creating artwork was also an act of being persuasive but it had some similarities. By hewing so tightly to what I thought I wanted them to get from the assignment, I overlooked what they did. Students often complain about online classes, especially the delivery system's inability to let them connect with other students as they do in the classroom. Over the years, I relied less on small group discussion assignments, going from 15 in Food Writing in Fall 2014 to six in Fall 2019. However, the work from those assignments showed they fostered camaraderie. From my observation notes of 98 end-of-semester assignments: "I was struck by the comments about how they enjoyed each other and got to know each other in ways they normally wouldn't in an online class."

Though I didn't intend in this discussion to draw correlations to all nine of Eisner's consequences, I touch on one more. In his essay, he wrote that there are ideas and images that can only be expressed through visual form, that the medium affects the message. That recalled Marshall McLuhan's famous 1964 proclamation that "the medium is the message," which could appropriately be applied to digital communication modes, extending to food photographs posted on social media sites like Instagram. More specifically to my study, food writing is a creative form that can be employed to create impact. My findings showed that elevating the study of food writing from the null curriculum is worthwhile. Null curriculum is an Eisner theory that recognizes that are topics that schools do not teach and that students don't get the opportunity to study, and I maintain that food, and by extension food writing, fall into this category. However,

the study of food writing does have educational worthiness in several areas, including the teaching of culture and current events. In addition, it connects with students' personal experiences and provides lessons that may stick with them whether intrinsically or in a more applicable way. The data showed that students were enthusiastic about the material, reacting positively to each other and to the assignments. The word "love" was a favorite. From one student writing about her reaction to the episode "Baptism by Briyani" from the podcast *Gravy*:

One of the things I particularly love about this episode is that it highlights a father and son who spend time in the kitchen preparing meals that serve as a foundation of their culture and more importantly, a direct link to their family heritage.

Another student responded to a classmate's post about this same podcast:

I love what you said about millennials who don't do much cooking and bonding with their parents. It's sad that many don't participate in that type of activity, but wonderful when we hear about the ones who do. It is a beautiful story to hear and even better that they are bringing the two generations together to ensure their cultural background persists.

As Noddings (2003) noted that food contributes to happiness, I found food writing did that too.

Connections to the Literature Review

Do food writing and food media have a public relations problem?

Dozens of students thought it was frivolous stuff at the beginning of the courses and surmised that the course would mostly focus on recipes, cookbook and online restaurant reviews. At the end, they come around to its worth, which was something that the literature suggested in part because they spend about a quarter of their budgets on what they eat and drink. However,

they have been made to feel by Baby Boomers that their interest in craft cocktails, avocado toast and faux meat is light-minded and a misguided use of their money. It appeared that they internalized this judgment, not seeing that writing about food could also be writing about culture, injustice, politics, health and economics. I found evidence through their enthusiasm for the assignments that they were connecting with the topic in profound ways. From one student:

Notes from a Young Black Chef ... was a very eye-opening and interesting read. Going in, I expected it to be an uplifting story about an African-American chef succeeding in modern America. And to some extent, I got what I expected. But I also experienced some very harsh realities of the world, including the world of food.

There was strong evidence in their work of the benefits of using non-fiction memoir to teach culture and relevancy. Waxman (2008) made a case for food memoir to take a bigger role in literature classes and I concurred after studying their reactions. Students reacted positively to the contemporary memoirs that I assigned, and connected them with their experiences. These were works they would have never read had they not been introduced to them in these classes.

From one student writing about Chef Marcus Samuelsson's memoir *Yes, Chef*:

I personally feel a deep satisfaction reading food memoirs and this one, unique in its journey from infancy into adulthood, captivated me completely. I felt as though I was in each location that Samuelsson visited and sympathized with each fear and sadness that he endured. I felt anger at his decisions at some points, like when he tried to tell his parents that plenty of people do not pay child support, but I also felt great happiness (and a bit of sadness at the loss of Jan) for him when he became an executive chef at Aquavit which permitted him to unleash his creative potential.

Another student from this same reflection assignment but for a different book:

Michael Twitty's *The Cooking Gene* is a type of culinary memoir that is written to embrace aspects of the historian's African-American culture and Southern cuisine. Facing America's unfathomable roots was hard to read, and I am sure it was hard for Twitty to write about and re-enact but with this book came the truth of where real comfort food originated from.

Food broke the ice on tough topics as Long (2001) said it had the ability to do, especially in conversations involving race and gender equity. The topic of food appropriation in the food writing courses is probably the most confusing concept and was met with resistance by some students. For many, this was their first introduction to the idea of the colonization of food for profit. The questions "who gets to make money from whose food?" and "who gets to tell whose story?" were new. An entire class could be built around this topic or certainly several weeks of study. A brief introduction from me set their thoughts in motion. From one student:

The phrase "food appropriation" to me yields an odd and uncomfortable response. I have heard of other forms of appropriation, such as the case with blues legend Elvis appropriating the blues genre from the African American community. However, when it comes to this term involving food I am hesitant. ... I see food for what it is, I do not try to peg food to a specific entity. I do not care who cooks it, good food is good food.

And another: "I think that the profiting off the culture of others is the saddest part of all of this. There are definitely less resources available to immigrants, who face a lot of discrimination. It's very odd how we think of others foods as 'ethnic' but not our own."

Their comments showed critical thinking and honesty, if not always buy-in. That is why I believe the study of food writing and food media provided a non-threatening jumping off point for discussion and the start of cultural awareness that could lead to cultural competency.

My Education/Their Education

I didn't make this connection at the time, but students in Food Writing in Fall 2017 read *The Cooking Gene* in the first year of Trump's presidency. Race and immigration were in the news and on their minds because of the president's policies and statements, often disseminated on Twitter. After an August 2017 neo-Nazi rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, resulted in violence, Trump condemned the act that led to a protester's death but also spoke of "very fine people on both sides" (Thrush & Haberman, 2017, para. 9). Fall semester 2017 was a good time to read Twitty's book because the topic of race in America was a major thread in this work. Many students commented that they wouldn't have thought about connecting race to food, or using it as a way to trace heritage. Despite the lack of instruction on the discussion prompt, the essays showed critical thinking. What was the difference in semesters past when the discussion of diversity was more superficial? I added readings on diverse voices in food writing to set the stage. There was also relevance to what was going on in the news (back to race and immigration issues). As I re-read their work, I thought that Twitty's story taught them more about slavery and race than they previously knew. It snuck up on them through the lens of food.

They read *Notes from a Young Black Chef* in September and October 2019 when the Black Lives Matter movement was gaining favor after a period of negative response from non-Black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). I wondered if this affected their responses because many talked about systemic racism and how they were saddened at the way the chef was treated. This book hit a chord with them more than any others I had assigned. I surmised that one reason was the chef's age. He was more of a contemporary at 27 years old. Current events also played a role. This book introduced them to a new kind of memoir, not one written by an older, established person but instead authored by a younger person whose life story, though still evolving, was interesting. I was heartened when reading them because they got out of the book

what I wanted and that was to understand how food could be used as character in a story. Yes, it was an example of food writing but they made connections to their own situations (some wrote about difficult home lives) and to society as a whole. I was taking Critical Race Theory when they read this book and felt McCutcheon (1981) strongly: “Theorists call for teachers to tailor their curriculum to students, local conditions, relevant matters.” Student response to Twitty’s counterstory of American history showed them “a way to unmoor people from received truths so that they might consider alternatives” (Ladson-Billings, 2012, p. 42).

My use of food journalism that reflected current events excited students because of its relevance. In Fall 2018, students studied Food Writing as Activism and I encouraged them to mix interpretation of the topic with their own experiences in their responses. My assignment was fairly vague and a stronger prompt might have alleviated some of the superficial responses. Most students (10) wrote about the #metoo movement in the restaurant industry story; followed by the piece on the BLM founder’s connection with cooking (6); queer in the kitchen (5), climate change and agriculture (3) and women in the fields (2). Many of the students in this class (and many in most of my classes) had food service industry experience. In this class, 21 of the 29 students were female, so it made sense that many had stories of sexual harassment. One student thought the #metoo movement had been overblown. The writer was female.

A class that I took entitled Transforming the Curriculum transformed my curriculum and thus me. The course introduced me to the great thinkers of curriculum, Dewey, Tyler and Bruner. Through them, I was able to understand more why some of my assignments did not garner the results I wanted. That helped me to be clearer in instructions and to articulate to students the goals of the assignments. I saw strongly through this study the value of the untaught lessons and how those might stay with students longer because they are more relevant to their lives at the

time of the course and thus are meaningful to them. That is as long as the professor realized they are occurring and placed value in them. This was a lesson for me going forward in my teaching.

I didn't limit the education that I addressed in this section solely to my coursework in the doctoral program. Lessons from my analysis could change my teaching, or at least spur me to deeper reflection about the ways I develop curriculum and ultimately how I could bring the study of food writing (or writing about food) to a wider university audience. I focused my discussion here on Food Writing since that is the course that most captures my heart and mind. For 20 years, or more if you count my dabbling in the genre pre-2000 when I became food editor of the *Tampa Bay Times*, food writing had been how I made my living. It combined my training and skill as a journalist with a genre that I loved, still do. Where I started my food journalism journey writing about home cooking, both by me and by others who were the focus of my stories, it morphed into broader topics, especially the intersection of food, travel and culture. In the latter part of my tenure as the *Times'* food editor the travel beat was added to my duties. It was then that I wrote stories from the road about the hunt for the best crab cakes in Maryland, a cooking school in the south of France, Mississippi's hot tamale tradition, food walking tours in Vancouver, B.C., the ubiquitous hummus of Israel, and the cheese trail of Vermont, among others. I wrote these stories with the aim that readers could either trace my footsteps on their own journeys or simply learn something about another corner of the world. The combination of food and travel was of interest to my students too, so much so that a number of them wrote in assignments that this pairing would be a dream job. This represented another area of connection that I did not exploit enough in my curriculum. Even though students thought of travel as visiting far-flung places, they lived in a state where tourism was the No. 1 industry with lots of possibilities for journalists. I could have assigned them to write a Florida travel story with food as its focus. Perhaps a piece on

alligator farms open to the public where the bounty becomes deep-fried gator bites? Or a (dreaded) group project that leads readers to the best fish spreads in the state? Like the food market assignment that I abandoned, these assignments would get them into their communities and state in ways they had not experienced.

To me, Food Writing is the course where journalism, storytelling, culture and social justice intersect and it is those areas about which I am most passionate. From this study I understood more fully that food journalism has the ability to move students and to provide a jumping off point for difficult conversations about new or misunderstood concepts, including immigration, assimilation, inclusion and even the economics of opportunity. As voters in the 2020 presidential election stood in long lines both on election day and for early voting, volunteers from social justice organizations brought them food and drink. Their message: Stay in line and here is the sustenance to do it. This was just one example of how food plays a part in social movements. I know this, but I have sometimes shortchanged the curriculum and thus the students by not delving further into more serious subjects of food journalism. I vacillated between entertainment and enlightenment when I should have fallen on the side of elucidation.

For this study, I selected for analysis the assignments where students responded from the gut to the message and content of the material. This revealed worldviews and belief systems. I did not consider assignments that were more about the mechanics of journalism or writing (how to describe food in words other than “good” or “awesome” for instance). I was drawn to look at their reactions to food writing that addressed social justice issues, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, civil rights, #metoo, food scarcity and injustice. It was the right decision for this study because those assignments did reveal the untaught lessons. But why even assign the others? They could be classified as fun busy work, which to me meant they were easy and

enjoyable assignments that didn't have much stickiness. The intended curriculum will be different in Fall 2021.

I saw from my study that I created Food Writing to be all things to all students, dabbling in every aspect of the genre instead of honing in on the topics that have the most impact. This is partially because of the graduate certificate and its lack of a defined target audience. (The undergraduate and graduate courses have essentially the same curriculum.) The certificate program has not garnered the attention that I think it should despite being the only one of its kind in the country and with revenue-generating possibilities from non-degree-seeking students paying graduate tuition. The broad content is meant to attract a variety of people, including food bloggers who want more academic training, nutrition professionals who believe media training might give them more clout in their industry, and adults looking for personal enrichment, among others. While I blamed the lack of university marketing efforts for the tepid interest, the nebulosity of the course offerings could be part of the reason. Several years ago, I tried to get the Food Writing course recognized in the state of Florida's university course numbering system as both an undergraduate and graduate offering. The paperwork to obtain a permanent JOU (journalism) course number cleared several committee hurdles at the university where I teach. The campus registrar eventually rejected the proposal. She told me that there was a CRW (creative writing) course called Narrative Non-Fiction that could be used for food writing. The non-specific name allowed the course to be tailored to many topics including food, travel, memoir, and even narrative journalism, she said. I did not like the idea of having a creative writing class in the course offerings of a journalism discipline. This was years before #fakenews became a political flashpoint. However, it felt to me that the course prefix lent itself to the possibility of misunderstanding, causing some students to interpret "creative" as fiction. The

rejection of the proposal after a months-long effort took the wind from my sails. I should have gone back at it with a course titled Food Journalism. After all, there are state-sanctioned Sports Reporting and Multimedia Sports Reporting courses. In addition, there are statewide courses for Business Journalism, Journalism Culture and Criticism, Entrepreneurial Journalism, Public Affairs Reporting and Judicial System Reporting. There is a precedent to establish reporting and journalism courses focused on a specific area of coverage.

Now I wonder, was I taking the topic seriously enough? I played into the same mindset, as the students who start the course thinking it would be about recipes, cookbooks and restaurant reviews. Frivolous and fun with a side of “aha.” There are social justice components of food journalism and media. The topic has the ability to connect with students and allow them a platform to talk and learn about challenging concepts reflected in our diverse society. It is time to move these courses beyond their hidden spots as special topics classes in a mass communication program.

Recommendations

Emboldened by the results of this study, I offered these three suggestions to bring the topic of food writing to a broader audience via additions to interdisciplinary curriculum and public programming. The label “food writing” is problematic because it conjures recipes, cookbooks and Internet food reviews, plus it is so generic as to not have any engaging or specific meaning. These suggestions bring the topic to a broader audience employing new course names and with social justice concepts that I highlight in my classes. The proposed classes/programs:

1. **General Education Course.** At the university where I teach, there are nine categories of general education courses, including the Human and Cultural Diversity in a Global Context category. There are many courses that study writing with food as a central

theme that could be added to this category, originating in departments of humanities, English, history or mass communications. For these recommendations, I offer a brief description of a course called Soul Food Exploration. This course would guide students to make the connection between what we call Southern food today and what was at one time called soul food, a label that came to prominence in the 1960s but has fallen out of favor. The description itself can be a point of study, tracing it to an article by Amiri Baraka, who coined the phrase and advocated connecting the culinary heritage of Southern Blacks to their identity (Wallach, 2014). Topics to be addressed are the ways that ingredients, farming and cooking techniques rooted in Southern slavery have been colonized for profit, and how systemic racism has created food deserts in African-American cities throughout the United States. Students will explore the genre of television cooking shows with an eye toward who is cooking soul food (White show hosts) under the guise of the Southern food label. Texts will include Michael Twitty's *The Cooking Gene: A Journey through African-American Culinary History in the Old South* and Toni Tipton-Martin's *The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks*.

2. **New Class for Food Studies Certificate.** A number of universities offer minors and certificates in Food Studies, including the university where I teach. The 15-credit undergraduate certificate through the Humanities and Culture Studies Department requires that students take Introduction to Food Studies and then select from a list of courses another 12 credits worth of electives. Among those electives are Ancient Diets and Italian Food in Film, but none include a literature or food journalism/writing focus. I advocate developing a class for the certificate called Food

Memoir, which would allow students to study the work of diverse writers whose life experiences centered around food are intertwined with their observations about culture and society.

3. **Food for Thought Speaker Series.** An annual event that brings to campus thought leaders on different topics around food. This could be underwritten by an outside source (Publix? Raymond James?) and open to the public. If I was formulating a slate of speakers today, I would aim for chef and restaurateur José Andrés, founder of World Central Kitchen which feeds survivors of disasters worldwide, and Tunde Wey, the Nigerian-born immigrant chef who stages dinners all over the country to kick off discussions about food and social politics. Pati Jinich, the host of the award-winning *Pati's Mexican Table* show on PBS, would bring a discussion about immigrant food and the well being of Mexican farmworkers and their contributions to the American table and the U.S. economy. Thinking ever bigger, representatives from the United Nation's World Food Programme, which won the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize, could share their experiences with combating food instability around the world through a multimedia presentation. WFP is the world's largest humanitarian group and could offer opportunities for students via internships or other experiential programs.

These events would have a fund-raising element for local social justice organizations.

My struggle with these great ideas: How does a lowly instructor on a branch campus that is in turmoil because of both consolidation and state budget cuts make the connections to bring them to fruition? My work and ideas should have a wider audience but advocates and allies are needed. Perhaps the time is right. The university renewed its efforts and dedication to anti-racism projects after the May 2020 death of George Floyd and subsequent nationwide protests and calls

for justice. My classes have a strong social justice component and new courses based on my ideas could lend to anti-racism work.

Ideas for Future Study

One of the limitations of this program evaluation was that it studied student work from the microcosm of the semesters that they took the classes without any follow up with students. I noted the untaught lessons that I found through the evaluation, and also how what was taught appeared to be synthesized into their lives at the time they were enrolled. I wonder now what, if anything, has stayed with them years later. A focus group conducted with former students would better determine how the material was synthesized into their lives. I see this as a valuable extension to my study and to further evaluate the relevance and long-lasting lessons of these courses and the topic of food journalism. If I wanted to use focus group methodology to explore this topic further, I could develop the questions but would ask an outsider to moderate and I would not be present. My presence would likely sway the answers. How could a student say with the teacher sitting there that she never thought about the curriculum even once after the class ended?

I saw in the data the many times students mentioned that they chose the courses based on assumptions that they would be fun, maybe even easy, and that they had already taken a class with me and found it engaging and/or satisfying. They admitted they had limited ideas about what the classes or topics entailed. A research project on why students select elective classes could be instructive for academic advisors, and curriculum and program developers.

Anecdotally, I frequently hear students say that classes they are enrolled in are not what they expected. I could image research questions: “What are the factors used by students to select university elective classes?” and “How do those factors contribute to student satisfaction?”

If I were to use this data for another study, I could explore the ways in which texting affects writing for university assignments, and whether that matters. I would start with the 128 times the exclamation point was used in one group of assignments. A case study of how the journey of one teacher who is also a doctoral student intersects with curriculum development for their own students could be valuable in determining the value and effects of continuing education.

Conclusion

This findings of this study provided insights into how the study of food journalism and food media made connections with students through curriculum curated by a connoisseur. My rare situation and experience – a retired veteran journalist who focused on food writing professionally now teaching university courses about food journalism – imbued the curriculum. This had both positive and negative outcomes, though it was likely that the students did not notice any downsides. Those bubbled up for me as the program evaluator and were more about my own examination of my teaching skills. When the courses were being taught, I was occasionally disappointed that student work did not meet my expectations. However, in evaluating 10 semesters of work from 2014 to 2019, I found that they were learning other things, perhaps even more valuable than meeting my goal of getting their work published. They were enthusiastic about and engaged with the material. They were surprised that food writing could be about more than recipes and restaurant reviews, which broadened their ideas of professional opportunities. They were enlightened about culture and social challenges. All of this was spurred by the study of food journalism and food media. As I re-read the work that I had assigned, graded and then closed the book on, I was reminded of what Dewey (1938) wrote about adults looking back on school days and wondering what became of the things taught to them. They

forgot so much mostly because the work was not relevant or dynamic enough to stick. I could focus Food Writing on writing itself, and spend the semester doing what they had expected: writing recipes, studying cookbooks and honing abilities to critique restaurants. By expanding the curriculum to show them how food journalists and writers for various mediums tackle current topics involving culture, politics, economics, history, health and social justice, the material had relevance. I could tell this from the thoughtful responses to various assignments. I was most surprised by the enthusiasm displayed in the work. A naysayer might chalk this up to student attempts to curry favor with a teacher that they liked and that they knew was in the love with the material. However, the large data set – 800 pieces of work – gave this observation trustworthiness.

The literature about college students' relationship with food emphasized its place in their day-to-day lives. College professors who allow food and drink in their classrooms could likely attest to this as they see students noshing big salads and dipping into bags of Chick-fil-A fries during lectures. Nearly all of them tote outsized containers of coffee, tea and sodas, or the occasional plastic gallon jug of water. They spend about 25 percent of their budgets on food and drink. Food is not only a pleasurable experience but important to their health and social lives. This is one reason that the study of food in university classrooms, which I maintained is part of what Eisner called the null curriculum, could have wider application as a way to connect with students and have longer lasting impacts. We want them to remember what we teach. I imagined a project in a business course that tackles a financial plan for a craft brew startup or a children's literature class studying the ways that food is written about in Young Adult (YA) novels as a way to study adolescent angst. Food figures prominently in *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson, the story of her splintered upbringing told in free verse. She writes about her mother

wanting her to learn to make collard greens and potato salad when she would be just as happy with pancakes from a box. There are many more books like this that could easily fill out a semester reading list.

I was firmly situated in Eisner's educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology for this program evaluation. I was not an impartial observer because my connoisseurship was woven tightly throughout the curriculum. This methodology suited the study because it allowed me to recognize my part in the student experience and at the same time to train a critical eye on how those threads affected outcomes. My study revealed that I was indeed able to steer them to work that showed the breadth of food journalism. Scriven's goal-free evaluation, another guiding methodology, encouraged me to stay open to new findings and reminded me that finding something interesting, if not exhaustive, was valid. I did not set out to prove that these courses were valuable, because in my heart I believed they were, but rather to look for the untaught lessons. In the end, I found those for students and me. Until I began the analysis of the student work, I did not realize that what I was learning in doctoral classes changed the curriculum, either by assignment development and explanation, or the ways that I was more transparent in my goals for them. The lesson for me was that I should consider what students are learning in conjunction with judging if they met my outcomes. That was the sweet spot.

"Feasting on Words: What University Students Learn When They Study Food Writing and Food Media" is the title of this dissertation. My journalistic training wanted to sum up a response to this in a short, punchy sentence that is known as a "lead." Journalists, and especially journalism teachers, advocate for leads that are 30 words or less, one sentence, one idea.

Academic writing precludes this style, and it seemed especially inappropriate for a doctoral

dissertation. However, I tried here. I ended this study with a lead, which is admittedly at the wrong end of the work and what is called “burying the lead.”

The lead: University students’ affinity for matcha green tea lattes, interest in social justice causes and abiding love affair with Anthony Bourdain make the study of food journalism both relevant and exciting. Thirty words. Not coincidentally -30- is the symbol used by print journalists to indicate the end of an article. And so it is used here.

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Appendix A: Readings

This is a partial list of the readings for the Food Writing and Food in Communication courses, 2014-2019. These readings coincide with the assignments being analyzed for this study.

Fall 2014 Food Writing

Book: *Tender at the Bone: Growing up at the Table* by Ruth Reichl (2010)

Readings:

- “The Case for Handwriting” by Deborah Madison, Zester Daily (Huffington Post)
- “Eat, Memory: The Sixth Sense” By Gary Shteyngart, *New York Times*
- “Shark Fin: Understanding The Political Soup” by Jonathan Kaufman, *SF Weekly*
- “Food Stamp Challenge: One Week, Four People and a Tight Budget” by Jill Silva, *Kansas City Star*

Fall 2015 Food Writing

Book: *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles: Adventures in the World of Chinese Food* by Jennifer 8. Lee (2009)

Readings:

- “The Case for Handwriting” by Deborah Madison, Zester Daily (Huffington Post)
- “Eat, Memory: The Sixth Sense” By Gary Shteyngart, *New York Times*
- “Hey Food Writers, Stop Comparing Food to Women” by L.V. Anderson, Slate.com
- “Craving the Food of Depravity” by Elissa Altman, Poormansfeats.com

Fall 2016 Food Writing

Book: *Yes, Chef: A Memoir* by Marcus Samuelsson with Veronica Chambers (2013)

Readings:

- “When Chefs Become Famous Cooking Other Culture’s Food,” by Mary Goody, NPR
- “Why Everyone Should Stop Calling ‘Immigrant Food’ Ethnic food,” by Lavanya Ramanathan, *Washington Post*
- “Old Missus vs. Mammy: Who Owns Southern Food” by Michael Twitty, vice.com
- “The Family Peach Farm that Became a Symbol of the Food Revolution” by Dan Charles, NPR

Fall 2017 Food Writing

Book: *The Cooking Gene: A Journey Through African American Cooking in the Old South* by Michael Twitty (2017)

Readings:

- “Why Everyone Should Stop Calling ‘Immigrant Food’ Ethnic food,” by Lavanya Ramanathan, *Washington Post*
- “Adrian Miller: Love, Peace and Sooooooul Food” by Toni Tipton-Martin on her blog, The Jemima Code
- “I had Never Eaten in Ghana. But My Ancestors Had” by Michael Twitty, writing in *Bon Appetit* magazine
- “Diverse Identities are Central to Food Writing” by Nik Sharma, writing on Dianne Jacob’s blog
- “Why We Can’t Talk about Race in Food,” CivilEats.com

- “We are Having the Wrong Conversation about Food and Cultural Appropriation,” by Dakota Kim, Paste.com
- “When Chefs Become Famous Cooking Other Culture’s Food,” by Mary Goody, NPR

Fall 2018 Food Writing

Book: *Buttermilk Graffiti: A Chef’s Journey to Discover America’s New Melting Pot Cuisine* by Edward Lee (2018)

Readings:

- “Why Everyone Should Stop Calling ‘Immigrant Food’ Ethnic food,” by Lavanya Ramanathan, *Washington Post*
- “Adrian Miller: Love, Peace and Sooooooul Food” by Toni Tipton-Martin on her blog, The Jemima Code
- “I had Never Eaten in Ghana. But My Ancestors Had” by Michael Twitty, writing in *Bon Appetit* magazine
- “Diverse Identities are Central to Food Writing” by Nik Sharma, writing on Dianne Jacob’s blog
- “Why We Can’t Talk about Race in Food,” CivilEats.com
- “We are Having the Wrong Conversation about Food and Cultural Appropriation,” by Dakota Kim, Paste.com
- “When Chefs Become Famous Cooking Other Culture’s Food,” by Mary Goody, NPR
- “In Farm Country, Grappling With the Taboo of Talking about Climate Change” by Bryce Oats, Civileats.com

- Food Writing in the #MeToo Era” by Kim Severson, *New York Times*
- “Queer in the Kitchen: Gender Politics Take Front Stage” by Christine Huang, Civileats.com
- “Chasing the Harvest: It Used to be Only Men Who Did This Job” by Gabriel Thompson, *Seriouseats.com*
- “To This Black Lives Matters Founder, Activism Begins in the Kitchen” by Eleanor Sontag, *Washington Post*

Fall 2019 Food Writing

Book: *Notes from a Young Black Chef: A Memoir* by Kwame Onwuachi and Joshua David Stein (2019)

Readings:

- “A White Restaurateur Advertised ‘Clean’ Chinese Food. Chinese-Americans had Something to Say About It” by Sharon Otterman, *New York Times*
- “Where the 2020 Presidential Candidates Stand on Food and Farming,” Civileats.com
- “Searching for an Ancient Dish in a New City,” by Leo Schwartz, *Roadsandkingdoms.com*
- “Why Everyone Should Stop Calling ‘Immigrant Food’ Ethnic Food,” by Lavanya Ramanathan, *Washington Post*
- “I had Never Eaten in Ghana. But My Ancestors Had” by Michael Twitty, writing in *Bon Appetit* magazine
- “Diverse Identities are Central to Food Writing” by Nik Sharma, writing on Dianne Jacob’s blog
- “Why We Can’t Talk about Race in Food,” *CivilEats.com*

- “We are Having the Wrong Conversation about Food and Cultural Appropriation,” by Dakota Kim, *Paste.com*
- “In Farm Country, Grappling With the Taboo of Talking about Climate Change” by Bryce Oats, *Civileats.com*
- “Food Writing in the #MeToo Era” by Kim Severson, *New York Times*
- “Queer in the Kitchen: Gender Politics Take Front Stage” by Christine Huang, *Civileats.com*
- “Chasing the Harvest: It Used to be Only Men Who Did This Job” by Gabriel Thompson, *Seriouseats.com*
- “To This Black Lives Matters Founder, Activism Begins in the Kitchen” by Eleanor Sontag, *Washington Post*

Spring 2016 and 2017 Food in Communication: TV

Books:

- *Watching What We Eat: The Evolution of Television Cooking Shows* by Kathleen Collins (2009)
- *From Scratch: Inside the Food Network* by Allen Salkin (2013)

Readings:

- “Food Network Celeb Guy Fieri Calls Out Celebrity Chef Anthony Bourdain,” *Starpulse.com*
- “The Rise of Incivility and Bullying In America,” *Psychology Today*

Spring 2019 Food in Communication: Food Podcasts

The work assigned for this class followed listening to podcasts rather than readings. The follow podcasts were assigned for the work included in this study.

From *Gravy*, a podcast produced by the Southern Foodways Alliance at Ole Miss:

- “Hostesses of the Movement,” “Baptism by Biryani,” “Dispatch from Duplin County,” and “Stories from the Hem of My Mother’s Apron.”
- From *The Trip*, a 2018 travel podcast hosted by Anthony Bourdain on Roadsandkingdoms.com, students listened to “Goats, Gods and Garlic” and “The Sandwich that Ate Pakistan.”
- From Taste Trekkers’ *Fine Dining* podcast, students listened to an episode with Inbal Baum founder of Delicious Israel, about eating in Israel.

Spring 2020 Food in Communication: Food Podcasts

The work assigned for this class followed listening to podcasts rather than readings. The follow podcasts are what was assigned for the work analyzed for my study.

From *Gravy*, a podcast produced by the Southern Foodways Alliance at Ole Miss:

- “Hostesses of the Movement,” “Agave Diplomacy,” and “A Taste of Place: Whiskey as Food.”

From various podcasts:

- “In Trump’s America, Immigrants are Afraid to Apply for Food Stamps,” Mother Jones’ *Bite*; “The Memory of Za’atar and a Free Palestine,” *Racist Sandwich*, and “The Jemima Code,” *Gravy*.

Appendix B: Assignments

The following are assignments gathered directly from the Canvas courses. These coincide with the student work analyzed for this study.

Fall 2014 Food Writing

End-of-semester assessment via small group discussion: Write at least 150 words on what you learned about food writing this semester. Address any element of the class, be it writing or simply the breadth of the topic, please share your thoughts on Canvas Discussion. As always, feedback on other students' comments is appreciated!

Personal food essay: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience from your past. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate on vacation. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. Build on last week's exercise on using lively, active words. File on Canvas.

Reflection: Write a 600- to 700-word reflection on *Tender at the Bone*. Reichl's book kicked off the modern food memoir genre. Why do you think it struck such a chord with readers? Did it make you think about the part food played in your home as you were growing up? Discuss how Reichl uses food to discuss the dynamics of her family. These are just prompts to get you thinking. Your essay can address other topics. File on Canvas

Farmers market vendor profile: This is a 600- to 800-word profile on a farmer or vendor at a Farmers Market (or simply an outdoor market). Your piece should be on someone who sells, produces or makes food (not soapmakers or tie-dye artists though dog food producers are okay!)

When I read your story, it should be apparent that you've hung out with your subject for a while. I want to read about the environment around your subject's stall; put me there. You could also go to the where the person makes the food or pulls up the crops. THIS IS NOT A FIRST-PERSON STORY!

Your story should have at least two sources, your subject and someone else. That someone else could be a customer, an employee or a market manager. (Please include source's contact information at the bottom of the story in case I want to do any fact-checking.) When I am done reading your piece, I should know why your subject does what he/she does. What's special about the person? Background? How's business? How many markets does he sell at? How many hours a week does she put in? Some vendors use markets as a way to promote their bricks-and-mortars business, is this the case with yours? Get to the market early to ask questions before it opens and gets busy. Get your subject's email or phone number so you can contact with further questions. DO NOT feel weird about follow-up questions.

Fall 2015 Food Writing (Face-to-face class)

Personal food essay: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate on vacation. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. Build on last week's exercise on using lively, active words. THIS IS A FIRST-PERSON ESSAY.

Reflection: Write a 600- to 700-word reflection on *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles: Adventures in the World of Chinese Food* by Jennifer 8. Lee. What surprised you most about her book? Have any of you been to China (or another country) and noted that the Chinese food there wasn't much like the Chinese food in America? What does Lee's book tell us about how food changes to fit cultures?

Farmers market vendor profile: Farmers market profile: 700- to 900-word story on a food vendor/farmer at a local outdoor market. **This should not be first-person.**

Fall 2016 Food Writing

Prompt for end-of-semester assessment via small group discussion: Write at least 150 words on what you learned about food writing this semester. Address any element of the class, be it writing or simply the breadth of the topic.

Personal food essay: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience from your past. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate on vacation. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. Build on Week 2's exercise on using lively, active words. File on Canvas. Grammar, punctuation, spelling count.

Response to food writers diversity webinar: The Professional Food Writers Symposium gave us a chance to hear from some big names in food writing. If you don't know much about them, take some time to research them on the Internet. They are making big waves and opening eyes. After listening to them and reading this week's selections, please answer these two prompts.

1. How did the content of the webinar and/or the readings change the way you think about how popular food writing addresses the ethnic heritage of food and who has a right to tell those stories? What did you hear/read that was new to you?

2. What did Michael Twitty said "If we can't sit at the table, we will knock the legs off of it."

What did he mean by that?

Reflection: A 600- to 700-word reflection on “*Yes, Chef*” by Marcus Samuelsson. You can approach the reflection as a book review or as your reaction to the book. You may cite other sources, too. I am looking for critical thinking about how food has shaped Samuelsson’s life.

Fall 2017 Food Writing

Prompt for end-of-semester assessment via small group discussion: Write at least 150 words on what you learned about food writing this semester. Address any element of the class, be it writing or simply the breadth of the topic.

Personal food essay: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience from your past. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate on vacation. Remember, food memories don’t always have to be positive. Build on Week 2’s exercise on using lively, active words. File on Canvas. Grammar, punctuation, spelling count.

Reflection: A 600- to 700-word reflection on “*The Cooking Gene*” by Michael Twitty. You can approach the reflection as a book review or as your reaction to the book. You may cite other sources, too

Discussion prompt for food appropriation discussion: What does the phrase “food appropriation” mean to you? Had you heard of the term before this week’s readings? In what ways do you think food writers might perpetuate some of the stereotypes surrounding certain foods and how we refer to them?? For instance, what is ethnic food and why do we make that distinction?

Fall 2018 Food Writing

Prompt for end-of-semester assessment via small group discussion: Write at least 150

words on what you learned about food writing this semester. Address any element of the class, be it writing or simply the breadth of the topic.

Personal food essay: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience from your past. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate anywhere. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. You could write about the significant other who dumped you at Chick-fil-A. Or maybe that your mother is a terrible cook or how you hate a popular food (pumpkin spice, tuna poke, avocado toast, fried chicken) that everyone else loves and how you feel judged ... or don't. Build on Week 2's exercise on using lively, active words. Tell a story. Grammar, punctuation, spelling count. Grammar, punctuation, spelling count.

Reflection: Write a 600-word reflection on *Buttermilk Graffiti* by chef Edward Lee. You can approach the reflection as a book review or as your reaction to the book. You may cite other sources, too. I am looking for evidence that you did the Week 12 readings and how what you learned from them might have influenced your thoughts about the book.

Discussion prompt for food appropriation discussion: There are a lot of readings this week, though most are fairly short. You will need to read them all to really understand the issue of "food appropriation." I will be looking for evidence that you have done this in your response to the prompt. What does the phrase "food appropriation" mean to you? Had you heard of the term before this week's readings? In what ways do you think food writers might perpetuate some of the stereotypes surrounding certain foods and how we refer to them?? For instance, what is "ethnic food" and why do we make that distinction, especially in a nation of immigrants that is becoming increasingly diverse.

Prompt for diversity in food writing discussion: Select one of this week's readings to write about but please read them all first to get a good idea of the breadth of topics in this genre of food writing. Tell me which story you selected and what drew you to it. What did you learn? Consider how journalistic writing intersects with food writing here. Four longish paragraphs.

Fall 2019 Food Writing

Prompt for end-of-semester assessment via small group discussion: Write at least 150 words on what you learned about food writing this semester. Address any element of the class, be it writing or simply the breadth of the topic.

Personal food essay: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience from your past. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate anywhere. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. You could write about the significant other who dumped you at Chick-fil-A. Or maybe that your mother is a terrible cook or how you hate a popular food (pumpkin spice, tuna poke, avocado toast, fried chicken) that everyone else loves and how you feel judged ... or don't. Build on Week 2's exercise on using lively, active words. Tell a story. Grammar, punctuation, spelling count. Grammar, punctuation, spelling count.

Reflection: Write a 600-word reflection on *Notes from a Young Black Chef: A Memoir* by Kwame Onwuachi. You can approach the reflection as a book review or as your reaction to the book. You may cite other sources, too. I am looking for evidence that you did the Week 12 readings and how what you learned from them might have influenced your thoughts about the book.

Prompt for Food appropriation discussion: There are a lot of readings this week, though most are fairly short. You will need to read them all to really understand the issue of "food

appropriation.” I will be looking for evidence that you have done this in your response to the prompt. What does the phrase “food appropriation” mean to you? Had you heard of the term before this week’s readings? In what ways do you think food writers might perpetuate some of the stereotypes surrounding certain foods and how we refer to them?? For instance, what is “ethnic food” and why do we make that distinction, especially in a nation of immigrants that is becoming increasingly diverse.

Prompt for diversity in food writing discussion: Select one of this week’s readings to write about but please read them all first to get a good idea of the breadth of topics in this genre of food writing. Tell me which story you selected and what drew you to it. What did you learn? Consider how journalistic writing intersects with food writing here. Four longish paragraphs.

Spring 2016 Food in Communication: TV

Prompt for what we learn about culture from TV food shows discussion: Can we learn something about the cultures of other countries from how their food is presented on TV? And if so, what are we learning? When you answer this prompt, think about this week's video clips and draw opinions, too, from some of the travel-food shows you've seen (*Bizarre Foods* and *No Reservations*, for example, when they venture outside the U.S.) What is the upside of learning about other cultures this way? The downside? Why do you think Chinese food and culture is such a popular subject on sitcoms?

Research paper proposal: This is a 250-word proposal for your 10-page research paper that can be just about ANYTHING having to do with food on TV. If you are still casting about for ideas, email me to brainstorm OR go back and watch the Week 2 video from me. The proposal can be a rough idea and it will allow me the opportunity to help shape the paper with you.

Prompt for TV chef in hot water and verbal wars discussion: So, the readings and videos this week show a more serious side of the cult of celebrity as it pertains to TV and how we perceive people and what we as a society will tolerate. Paula Deen's racist comments cost her a lot, initially, but now she is back on the air. Guy Fieri and Anthony Bourdain continually go at it, mostly at the pushing of Bourdain. And Gordon Ramsay? Well, he just likes to cuss. Is this entertainment? This week, I would like you to discuss how much is too much, in your opinion, and why we tolerate "bad behavior," or incivility from some, but not from others. When is it entertainment and when does it cross a line?

Spring 2017 Food in Communication: TV

Discussion prompt for What We Learn about Culture from TV Food Shows: Can we learn something about the cultures of other countries from how their food is presented on TV? And if so, what are we learning? When you answer this prompt, think about this week's video clips and draw opinions, too, from some of the travel-food shows you've seen (*Bizarre Foods* and *No Reservations*, for example, when they venture outside the U.S.) What is the upside of learning about other cultures this way? The downside? Why do you think Chinese food and culture is such a popular subject on sitcoms?

Prompt for TV chefs in hot water and verbal wars discussion: So, the readings and videos this week show a more serious side of the cult of celebrity as it pertains to TV and how we perceive people and what we as a society will tolerate. Paula Deen's racist comments cost her a lot, initially, but now she is back on the air. Guy Fieri and Anthony Bourdain continually go at it, mostly at the pushing of Bourdain. And Gordon Ramsay? Well, he just likes to cuss. Is this entertainment? This week, I would like you to discuss how much is too much, in your opinion,

and why we tolerate “bad behavior,” or incivility from some, but not from others. When is it entertainment and when does it cross a line?

Research paper proposal: A 100-word proposal for your 10-page research paper that will serve as your final. I want to know what you are going to research and why. Rewatch my Week 2 lecture for more specifics about the paper. Look in files at Semester papers suggestions (see below). Please file as a .doc or .docx document on Canvas.

Reflection: A 1,000-word reflection on diversity and/or gender roles on TV shows in which food or cooking is prominent. This is an opinion piece that will show you’ve done some research into the topic. I will know you’ve done some research because you’ve quote or cited at least TWO sources. I am looking for evidence of critical thinking and an original point of view. You MAY use first person. CHECK spelling, grammar and make sure you’ve included the correct spelling of any people. Five points off for each name that is misspelled. It’s Paula Deen (not Dean); it’s Gordon Ramsay (not Ramsey); it’s Andrew Zimmern (not Zimmer). Names of shows should be in italics.

Semester papers suggestions: I am sharing with you topics from previous students in this class, plus some of my own, to get your creative juices flowing. If you need to brainstorm ideas, email me. Or bounce them off classmates, especially those in your discussion groups.

Paper No. 1: Report on TV Cooking Show (N/A for this study)

1. *Master Chef Jr.* and how children are different from adults in competition
2. Ingredient evolution on *Top Chef*
3. The appeal of *Chopped*
4. *Cupcake Wars* vs. *The Great British Baking Show*
5. An assessment of Netflix’s four-part series, *Cooked*
6. Does anyone ever beat Bobby Flay?
7. Portrayal of Ina Garden on television
8. Rapper Action Bronson cuts loose on *F*#&, that’s Delicious*, an Internet show

Paper No. 2: Reflection on Diversity/Gender Roles

1. TV Moms and How they Cook (or Don’t)

2. Portrayal of Chinese Food on Sitcoms
3. Do Men Cook More than Barbecue on TV?
4. What Women on Food Network Wear
5. Racial Diversity on TV Cooking Shows. Is there any?
6. The Trend of Male/Female Pairs on Food Competitions
7. The Blended Family of *Full House* Cooks without a Mom
8. What's the Deal with June Cleaver's pearls?

Research paper

1. Who's Cooking? A comparison of sitcoms and the role of the cook from the past decades and today
2. New York City as a backdrop for TV food stories, especially on sitcoms
3. A survey of shows that try to help failing bars and restaurants
4. Cooking shows hosted by chefs vs. cooking shows hosted by celebrities
5. Andrew Zimmern and Anthony Bourdain: Show hosts that are in your face
6. The Rise and Fall and Rise of Paula Deen
7. How Alton Brown's *Good Eats* changed the cooking show genre
8. A look at Internet cooking shows
9. *My Drunk Kitchen* and the rise of an Internet star
10. The language of the judges on competitive cooking shows
11. How have TV kitchens changed over the years?

Spring 2018 Food in Communication: Food Podcasts

End-of-semester assessment via small group discussion: Share with the group what you know now about podcasting that you didn't know on Jan. 8. Address both what you learned about food/drink podcasts and what makes a successful (or boring!) podcast. Now that you've spent some time studying the genre, is it something you would like to do? Why or why not.

Podcast diversity report: Find a podcast or use one that we've listened to this semester and write about how it addresses diversity and/or gender roles in the culinary field. This is a 600-word assignment. Did the podcast shed light on a topic for you or make you think about diversity in a new way? Please provide a link to the episode(s) you listened to.

Prompt for The Southern Table discussion: These four episodes of *Gravy* are dripping with storytelling techniques. What did you notice about how the reporters presented the stories that contributed to the narrative? They are different than some of the other podcasts we have

listened to in this way. Address each episode. Which episode struck you as most interesting and why? Did you learn something new about Southern food culture? If so, what.

Prompt for travel by podcast discussion: We often have the idea that travel journalism/media is about cheap airfare, good places to stay and sights not to miss. These podcasts about food in other places challenge that notion. The most intriguing travel stories tell something about the culture and might just prompt the reader/listener to get on a plane. What about these podcasts that intertwine food with culture piqued your interest about going to these places? (Or didn't.) What did you learn about the culture through the food that lets you be an armchair traveler? On a side note, there seems to be a real lack of these kinds of podcasts. Maybe an opportunity? I'd love to hear your ideas about a travel/food podcast. What would be your dream food/travel podcast to produce?

Spring 2019 Food in Communication: Food Podcasts

Prompt for end-of-semester assessment via small group discussion: Share with the group what you know now about podcasting that you didn't know on Jan. 7. Address both what you learned about food/drink podcasts and what makes a successful (or boring!) podcast. Now that you've spent some time studying the genre, is it something you would like to do? Why or why not. I also want you to address the content of the podcasts you listened to. What were your impressions of the topics that were covered? Think especially about how culture was addressed. You can comment on the podcasts of the people in your groups and how they addressed culture, if they did.

Prompt for pod save diversity discussion: A reminder: The more thorough and deep you go on your response to the prompt, the better your group discussion will be. I will be looking at this this week when I give points. There are many podcasts that address diversity, plus the politics surrounding food. I picked the podcasts this week because, well, mostly I think they are

interesting. Tell the group which one you found most interesting (and that includes entertaining) and why. Are there serious topics about food that you think would make a good podcast? Share two ideas. (Before you do, hunt around the Internet to see if they already exist. If they do, share the links, please.)

Prompt for the Southern table discussion: These three episodes of Gravy are dripping with storytelling techniques. What did you notice about how the reporters presented the stories that contributed to the narrative? They are different than some of the other podcasts we have listened to in this way. Address each episode. Which episode struck you as most interesting and why? Did you learn something new about Southern food culture? If so, what.

Appendix C: Purpose/Goals of Classes

From Fall 2014 and 2015 Food Writing Syllabuses

The purpose of this course is study how cultural ties to food are translated into the written word. By the end of the semester, students will understand the wide variety of storytelling techniques used to communicate our connections with food, be they economic, political, scientific, sustainable or pleasurable.

Course specifics: This course will provide an overview of the food-writing genre. Students will study contemporary food writing in blogs, magazines, newspapers and cookbooks that focus on everything from politics to memoir to cooking instructions. Beyond studying the many facets of food writing, students will write their own food stories, among them essays, restaurants reviews, and/or human interest features.

From Fall 2016 Food Writing Syllabus

The purpose of this course is study how cultural, economic, political and health connections to food are translated into the written word. By the end of the semester, students will understand the wide variety of storytelling techniques used to communicate our connections with food, be they economic, political, scientific, sustainable or pleasurable.

Course Specifics: This course will provide an overview of the food-writing genre. Students will study contemporary food writing in blogs, magazines, newspapers and cookbooks that focus on everything from politics to memoir to cooking instructions. Beyond studying the many facets of food writing, students will write a personal food essay, a restaurant review and a food feature.

From Fall 2017, 2018 and 2019 Food Writing Syllabuses

The purpose of this course is study how cultural, economic, political and health connections to food are translated into the written word. By the end of the semester, students will understand the wide variety of storytelling techniques used to communicate our connections with food, be they economic, political, scientific, sustainable or pleasurable.

Course Specifics: This course will provide an overview of the food-writing genre. Students will study contemporary food writing in blogs, magazines, newspapers and cookbooks that focus on everything from politics to memoir to cooking instructions. Beyond studying the many facets of food writing, students will write a personal food essay and a restaurant review.

From Spring 2016 and 2017 Food in communication Syllabuses

Television is an influential shaper of our worldviews. Because of this, it is rife for critical attention. This class will study the effects of TV programming on our relationship with food. Sitcoms, food-centric travel shows, the vast selection of cooking programs, and more, influence the way we think about food. At the end of this course, students will have a better understanding of the history of food on TV and how the social climate of different eras affect what we see on TV. In addition, they will be aware that what we see on TV affects our attitudes and ultimately influences eating, buying and dining habits.

Course specifics: This is an online seminar class that is designed for mostly independent study with regular group involvement via discussions on Canvas. Students will share opinions on readings and videos. There will also be video lectures and other assigned videos and readings to further discussion and explain theories. Students are expected to interact with other students on the discussion boards. There will be three papers due this semester, including a research paper that will serve as a final. The others will be a report on a TV cooking show and an essay on

diversity and/or gender roles on TV shows in relation to the depiction of food.

From Spring 2018 and 2019 Food in communication Syllabuses

Topics in Food Communication: Podcasts will introduce students to the broad genre of food-related podcasts. Not only will students be exposed to the many voices talking about food, drink and culture in the digital space, but they will learn the essential ingredients in creating a successful podcast. The purpose of this course is to broaden horizons on what food/drink means to culture and how we are able to learn more about each other through this democratic form of digital communication. The bar is low to start a podcast. But a good one? That takes some effort. Students will see this as they listen to a variety of podcasts over the semester.

Course Specifics: This is an online seminar class that is designed for mostly independent study with regular group involvement via discussions on Canvas. Students will share opinions on readings and podcasts. There will also be video lectures to further discussion and explain theories. Students are expected to interact with other students on the discussion boards. There will be two essays due this semester plus you will start your own podcast and record three shows. There, I buried the lead. Your podcast, which you can do alone or with someone else, is about 30 percent of your grade.

Appendix D: Food in Communication Raw Data Observations

Food in Communication: TV

Reflections on Food-centric TV Shows

Spring, 2017, 17 reflections

Assignment: A 1,000-word reflection on diversity and/or gender roles on TV shows in which food or cooking is prominent. This is an opinion piece that will show you've done some research into the topic. I will know you've done some research because you've quote or cited at least TWO sources. I am looking for evidence of critical thinking and an original point of view. You MAY use first person.

CHECK spelling, grammar and make sure you've included the correct spelling of any people. Five points off for each name that is misspelled. It's Paula Deen (not Dean); it's Gordon Ramsay (not Ramsey); it's Andrew Zimmern (not Zimmer). Names of shows should be in italics.

Observation jottings:

- Sense of outrage at gender stereotypes on TV cooking shows
- Rachael Ray, Giada, Paula Deen, Anthony Bourdain, Bobby Flay, Ree Drumond mentioned a lot
- Lack of understanding of what a chef is
- All but one paper was on Food Network/competition cooking shows
- They noticed women in home kitchens without aprons and men in chef's coats in more commercial surroundings
- The word "stereotype" used 30 times
- On sitcoms, men cooking are single.
- Women almost never in road shows; always at home
- Calls to action. Things must change

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Relationships, confusion, defiance, discovery

Inductive codes: Confidence, connection, media familiarity, call to action.

Three of the 17 papers were by males. This could account for the sense of outrage that women were portrayed more as home cooks, even if they were chefs and had businesses. 10 of the papers were either about Food Networks celebs or cooking show hosts. Only two papers addressed issue of diversity, or the lack of it. The more interesting papers were those that revisited favorite shows and looked at them with new eyes and purpose. In reading these again after three years, I am not convinced the research was that revelatory to them. I think it probably just reinforced what they already knew and they picked topics they already knew about. Checked

off the box of the assignment? Several students did mention that women are not hosts of road trips type food shows a la Andrew Zimmern, Anthony Bourdain and Guy Fieri. (Has changed in 2020 with Padma Lakshmi show and Pati Jinich on PBS.) Supports the literature that this generation is obsessed with food. They had no trouble coming up with shows to watch/assess. They were already fans.

Discussion: What We Learn about Culture From TV Food Shows

Spring, 2016, 23

Discussion prompt: Can we learn something about the cultures of other countries from how their food is presented on TV? And if so, what are we learning? When you answer this prompt, think about this week's video clips and draw opinions, too, from some of the travel-food shows you've seen (*Bizarre Foods* and *No Reservations*, for example, when they venture outside the U.S.) What is the upside of learning about other cultures this way? The downside? Why do you think Chinese food and culture is such a popular subject on sitcoms?

Observation jottings:

- Misspellings of names
- Text-writing (lowercasing, abbreviations)
- Drawing connection to their families
- Self-disclosing their own food likes/dislikes
- Food-centric food shows seen as more insightful into culture than sitcoms or cooking shows
- Noted stereotypes
- Recognition of the limits of TV as a teaching medium
- Familiarity with shows; none were unknown to them
- Gordon Ramsay as rude
- Interest in shark fin soup description
- Congenial in discussions
- All appeared to have watched the material

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Relationships, discovery

Inductive codes: Confidence, connection, media familiarity

There was virtually no hemming and hawing about the prompt. They were clear in what they thought. I was disappointed at the sloppiness and how texting clearly influenced the writing. So many misspelled names and lack of capitalization on proper words. Several students mentioned they had taken food writing the semester before and drew some connection. That showed relevance in the material. They were familiar with all of the shows. Not one student wrote it was a first time watching. This aligns with the literature that relevant material is a good way to reach students and to having a last impact. Many wrote that they felt that Bourdain and Zimmern were more respectful of culture. They also knew that TV is about ratings. Three times Chinese food was called "cheap." Their responses to that part of the prompt were all over the place. They wrote about stereotypes, about how accents were played for laughs, about how

Chinese restaurants are everywhere so that a wide audience can relate to eating the food or the décor, about how Chinese food is embedded into American culture now. Many used “Chinese” and “Asian” interchangeably furthering that notion that Americans don’t understand the differences of Asian countries. (I don’t usually jump in on the discussions but rather wait until they are done and give students individual feedback. Maybe I should. Part of this is a time issue.)

Spring 2017, 18 responses

Discussion Prompt: Can we learn something about the cultures of other countries from how their food is presented on TV? And if so, what are we learning? When you answer this prompt, think about this week's video clips and draw opinions, too, from some of the travel-food shows you've seen (*Bizarre Foods* and *No Reservations*, for example, when they venture outside the U.S.)

What is the upside of learning about other cultures this way? The downside? Why do you think Chinese food and culture is such a popular subject on sitcoms?

Observation jottings:

- Upside: good for people who can't travel
- Downside: the small sliver of culture can lead to stereotypes
- Referenced the shows and specific scenes
- Food-centric food shows seen as more insightful into culture than sitcoms or cooking shows
- Noted stereotypes
- Recognition of the limits of TV as a teaching medium
- Familiarity with shows; none were unknown to them
- Congenial in discussions
- All but one student appeared to have watched the videos

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Relationships, discovery, surprise, confusion

Inductive codes: Confidence, media familiarity, connection

They were familiar with the shows and hosts; no one was a newbie to the programs. I thought this showed a correlation to the literature about using relevant material as a jumping off point. They mostly agreed that the food-centric travel shows had more ability to teach about culture than sitcoms/cooking shows. Like the previous group, they were all over the place with their reason why Chinese food/restaurants were used so often. They also wrote about stereotypes, about how accents were played for laughs, about how Chinese restaurants are everywhere so that a wide audience can relate to eating the food or the décor, about how Chinese food is embedded into American culture now. Many used “Chinese” and “Asian” interchangeably furthering that notion that Americans don’t understand the differences of Asian countries. (The word “Asian” appears 15 times.) Two students drew a connection about expectations of accents and culture to their nail salons, where mostly women from Southeast Asian (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos) are employed. Another area of relativity. Again, I am thinking that jumping in to the discussions can get them to think more deeply. They mostly agree that something about culture is learned from watching TV but are wary about how deep that education can be. One student hailed Netflix as a place where better programming about culture will be found.

Research Paper Proposal

Spring 2016, 23 submissions

Assignment: This is a 250-word proposal for your 10-page research paper that can be just about ANYTHING having to do with food on TV. If you are still casting about for ideas, email me to brainstorm OR go back and watch the Week 2 video from me. The proposal can be a rough idea and it will allow me the opportunity to help shape the paper with you. (In addition there was a 17-min video lecture about the research paper and another assignment that included the outline and lit review)

Observation jottings:

- Interest in cooking competition shows
- Enthusiasm for the assignment
- Most proposals tied to a specific show or comparison of like shows
- Only two looking at gender roles; one at the design of cooking show kitchens and another about how sitcoms set in NY show food scene
- Proposals written almost as brainstorming
- Drawn to shows they already watch
- Mention of online shows; new media
- Informal in their presentation
- Several mentioned the video lecture as helpful

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: discovery, confusion

Inductive codes: Confidence, media familiarity, enthusiasm, connection

Some nervousness about writing such a long paper but in general they were enthusiastic about their ideas. A few had several ideas and were trying to hone them. I went into the proposals when I grade and give specific feedback, including how to find research material. Those that were vague I guide them to find focus. In general, I thought the ideas were good and showed their connection to the material. Again, the topic seemed relevant, especially because they watch TV. Their interest in food competition shows certainly shows why there are so many. This age group is a valuable audience for TV programmers. The cult of Bourdain is strong. Six mentions.

Spring 2017, 16 submissions

Assignment: A 100-word proposal for your 10-page research paper that will serve as your final. I want to know what you are going to research and why. Rewatch my Week 2 lecture for more specifics about the paper. Look in Files at semester papers suggestions. Please file as a .doc or .docx document on Canvas.

Observation jottings:

- Informal writing
- New media (Buzzfeed)
- Creative ideas

- Contemporary shows (cooking with marijuana; Snoop and Martha)
- Not a lot of specific on where they would get information
- Drawn to shows they already watch
- Informal in their presentation

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: discovery, food writing/food media

Inductive codes: Confidence, media familiarity, connection, enthusiasm, sophistication

These proposals are the beginning of the process for writing the paper. They also turn in an outline and lit review before the final. I am looking at these proposals for the study rather than the final work because I think it's a good gauge of whether the topic has piqued their interest and what they find relatable. By getting a choice of what to research, they have control. The finished products were okay and for some this is the first time they've done a lit review. Might be too advanced for them. Also, I included video instruction (again) and a list of possible ideas. This helps jumpstart their thinking. This semester's students went beyond the obvious and looked at new media too. They wanted to explore the new cooking shows on the Internet, a place where they are more at home almost than TV. These proposals were more about concepts/trends, such as an assessment of sitcom kitchens in three different decades, than individual cooking shows.

Discussion: TV Chefs in Hot Water

Spring 2016, 21 responses

Discussion prompt: So, the readings and videos this week show a more serious side of the cult of celebrity as it pertains to TV and how we perceive people and what we as a society will tolerate. Paula Deen's racist comments cost her a lot, initially, but now she is back on the air. Guy Fieri and Anthony Bourdain continually go at it, mostly at the pushing of Bourdain. And Gordon Ramsay? Well, he just likes to cuss. Is this entertainment? This week, I would like you to discuss how much is too much, in your opinion, and why we tolerate "bad behavior," or incivility from some, but not from others. When is it entertainment and when does it cross a line?

Observation jottings:

- Informal writing
- Recognition that TV needs drama for viewers
- Deen worse than Bourdain, Ramsay, Fieri
- Several comments about Trump (April 2016)
- Thoughtful writing
- Acceptance of a more crude public
- "That's entertainment"
- Strong opinions

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: discovery, expectations

Inductive codes: Confidence; media familiarity, group think, connection, sophistication

The responses from this class show that this age group, generally early 20s, is well accustomed to opinions and vitriol from the Internet. “Bully” or “bullying” as used 14 times. In general they find it entertainment when the chefs behave badly by cussing or yelling at each other. They expressed little tolerance for Deen’s racist comments. Several wrote that it’s wrong to disparage a group of people. Also, it was written a few times that what she said was so different than the image she put forth: the nice old Southern lady. They would not be so surprised if one of the men had said things like this; they already thought they were over the line. This assignment speaks to the literature about relevance. They drew the connection to what is going on online with the ability to comment on posts and have your opinion known in many ways. I did not guide them to that. As with most discussions, there was no disagreement in the responses. Perhaps these are better looked at as a way they can make connection with each other since they are not face-to-face. Does it have other values?

Spring 2017, 19 responses

Discussion prompt: So, the readings and videos this week show a more serious side of the cult of celebrity as it pertains to TV and how we perceive people and what we as a society will tolerate. Paula Deen’s racist comments cost her a lot, initially, but now she is back on the air. Guy Fieri and Anthony Bourdain continually go at it, mostly at the pushing of Bourdain. And Gordon Ramsay? Well, he just likes to cuss. Is this entertainment? This week, I would like you to discuss how much is too much, in your opinion, and why we tolerate “bad behavior,” or incivility from some, but not from others. When is it entertainment and when does it cross a line?

Observation jottings:

- Informal writing
- Distinction between bad language and racist language
- Reality show influence
- Resignation to the way things are
- Drama as part of entertainment
- Gender differences
- “I think” appears 69 times

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: discovery, expectations

Inductive codes: Confidence, media familiarity, connection

This group had some similar responses to the year before, especially when it came to expectations. They expect the guys to cuss, they don’t expect that of the women on cooking shows mostly because of the ways they have been presented. They have lots of opinions on crudeness, mostly resignation to the way things are. I am not sure that these shows connected with them that strongly even though they seemed to know a lot about reality shows. They enjoy them but they know how orchestrated they are. They are not naïve. Compared to group before, bullying only mentioned twice and by the same person. I am starting to believe that I looked for the wrong thing from this assignment. I wanted to show them the incivility on TV but they really already knew about it and save for a couple students, they didn’t really care. Was it a check-off-the-box assignment?

Food in Communication: Food Podcasting

End-of-Semester Assessment

Spring 2018, 25 assessments

Discussion prompt: Share with the group what you know now about podcasting that you didn't know on Jan. 7. Address both what you learned about food/drink podcasts and what makes a successful (or boring!) podcast. Now that you've spent some time studying the genre, is it something you would like to do? Why or why not.

I also want you to address the content of the podcasts you listened to. What were your impressions of the topics that were covered? Think specifically about how culture was addressed. You can comment on the podcasts of the people in your groups and how they addressed culture, if they did.

Observation jottings:

- New to the genre
- Surprise at variety
- Breadth of topics revolving around food
- “Not as easy as they look” sentiment repeated
- Easy to start/hard to do
- The medium grew on them
- Lots of enthusiasm for the genre
- “Editing podcasts is no joke” ... technology can be difficult
- They are in love with exclamation points
- Some of the responses have yearbook-like salutations.
- Introduced to podcasts
- They love exclamation points. 128 of them. Sometimes used double and triple at the end of one sentence.

More observations/analysis/analysis:

Deductive codes: discovery, surprise, expectations

Inductive codes: Technology, media familiarity, enthusiasm, connection, preconceived notions

This was my first semester teaching this course. Re-reading the assessments in one take made me realize that I accomplished what I set out to do: Introduce them to the genre of podcasting while expanding their ideas about what food media is and can be. They expressed enthusiasm for the genre, writing that they would continue listening to a few that I introduced to them. They responded positively to both parts of the course which were listening to a variety of podcasts and then developing and producing three episodes of their own. They got what I wanted them to get: it's hard work. Many mentioned that they thought it was just turn on the mic and talk. They didn't realize how time-consuming research before and the editing after was. I noticed with this class, more so than other online courses I have studied, that the small groups seemed to become friends. Their responses had the feel of yearbook salutations with comments like “good luck after graduation” and “hope to see you soon.” Another example that food

media/journalism/writing needs better PR. Their preconceived notion was that the topics would all be about cooking and eating out; not culture. Their responses tap into the literature about how this age group is obsessed with food. NO ONE disliked the topic.

2019, 27 assessments

Discussion prompt: Share with the group what you know now about podcasting that you didn't know on Jan. 7. Address both what you learned about food/drink podcasts and what makes a successful (or boring!) podcast. Now that you've spent some time studying the genre, is it something you would like to do? Why or why not.

I also want you to address the content of the podcasts you listened to. What were your impressions of the topics that were covered? Think specifically about how culture was addressed. You can comment on the podcasts of the people in your groups and how they addressed culture, if they did.

Observation jottings:

- Surprise at variety
- New to the genre
- Breadth of topics revolving around food
- “Not as easy as they look” sentiment repeated
- Easy to start/hard to do
- “Editing podcasts is no joke” ... technology can be difficult
- Commented on specific podcasts and likes/dislikes
- Wished they knew about podcasts sooner in j-journey
- Confidence in likes/dislikes
- Recognized storytelling possibilities

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Discovery, surprise, expectation

Inductive codes: Technology, enthusiasm, connection, preconceived notions, confidence

I had an epiphany reading the 2019 podcast class assessments. Could it be that they were more into the discussion on this prompt because the genre they studied felt relevant/fresh? And could it also be that they were more invested because they created something that everyone in their group listened to? I thought about Dewey's idea that we teach in the “here and now.” Podcasts are a big deal right now and many of them knew about them, but never listened to them. This was an introduction. My curation skills are evident in the podcasts that I assigned to them. I was able to show them different techniques and topics. They also recognized this as another storytelling platform that can be used to augment their narrative journalism skills. I wanted them to understand that podcasting uses some of the same skills as basic journalistic writing: research/reporting, planning, production (writing) and editing. There were several who lamented taking the class so late in their j-studies. Make me wonder if we expose them enough to platform they relate to early enough. I don't think so. It is good for them to leave this class with a basic understanding of podcasts ... they might be asked to help with one in their first jobs. Or they can suggest one. There are transferable skills here. Several mentioned that might continue the

podcast they started or use the skills to start another.

Podcast Diversity Report

Spring 2018, 25 reports

Assignment: Find a podcast or use one that we've listened to this semester and write about how it addresses diversity and/or gender roles in the culinary field. This is a 600-word assignment. Did the podcast shed light on a topic for you or make you think about diversity in a new way? Please provide a link to the episode(s) you listened to.

Observation jottings:

- Understanding of how journalism fits into podcasts
- Connection to material
- Only three ventured out to find new podcasts (one was not about food)
- They picked podcast they liked and already agree with
- Reacted positively to storytelling features
- Drawn to stories of racial inequities and gender discrimination
- Learned something about history

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Relationships

Inductive codes: Enthusiasm, connection, media familiarity

The students did what I asked of them but I am not sure if the assignment was a success in that is it something that will stick with them? It feels a bit more like check-off-the-box work now that I re-read. Because they were able to pick their own podcasts to listen to, they selected something they liked and likely already agree with. There was evidence of careful listening but only a few students displayed deeper thinking and connected the pods to journalism or even their own lives. This is the only semester that I used this assignment. I think now that they got to the topic of diversity and gender on other assignments and it feels like. It does bolster my theory and the literature that new media and food is not used enough in college curriculum. Some of these podcasts could be used in a class about race relations or specifically the Civil Rights movement. A gender studies class could also use them. It's another way to reach students where they are.

Discussion: The Southern Table

Spring 2018, 24 responses

Assignment: These four episodes of Gravy are dripping with storytelling techniques. What did you notice about how the reporters presented the stories that contributed to the narrative? They are different than some of the other podcasts we have listened to in this way. Address each episode. Which episode struck you as most interesting and why? Did you learn something new about Southern food culture? If so, what?

Observation jottings:

- Some understanding of how journalism fits into podcasts

- Recognized storytelling aspects
- They liked episodes that entertained them
- They multitasked while listening
- Noted personal nature/intimacy of episodes
- Made connection with their own families
- Noted, all but one, that the different voices were more engaging than just having hosts
- Only one student addressed what was learned about Southern food culture
- Recognized “investigative” angle in podcast about hog farming

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Relationships, discovery

Inductive codes: Enthusiasm, connection

Hardly any students addressed the last part of the prompt that asked them to talk about what they learned about the Southern table. After reading the assignments again, I see why. Most of them grew up in the South, including Florida, and the notion of the “Southern table” doesn’t resonate with them. A better question would be to have asked them what they saw that reflected “their Southern heritage.” I was coming to this as an outsider. In the introduction of the videos, I wrote “This week, listen to four episodes of “Gravy” (they are about 30 minutes each) and then head over to the discussion to talk about storytelling and what you learned about the changing South.” Do they know the South is changing? Most of the students are 19 to 22 in this class. What do they know about the South and how it’s changed? That prompt feels like it was written for a Baby Boomer. Also, I wanted them to draw connection between journalism and podcasts. The techniques used on these podcasts were very much like what a narrative journalists would use. Some got that but I didn’t really ask the question. They did like the podcasts; the word “enjoy” used 45 times. (Happiness/Noddings.) Their responses showed that podcasts can be used in classroom to great effect. They learned things about history and culture.

Spring 2019, 27 responses

Discussion prompt: These three episodes of Gravy are dripping with storytelling techniques. What did you notice about how the reporters presented the stories that contributed to the narrative? They are different than some of the other podcasts we have listened to in this way. Address each episode. Which episode struck you as most interesting and why? Did you learn something new about Southern food culture? If so, what.

Observation jottings:

- Some understanding of how journalism fits into podcasts
- If they didn’t like topic, turned off by podcast
- The responses show who is open to something new and who is so-so about it
- Recognized storytelling aspects
- Noted the names of the reporters and what they contributed
- Did not really address Southern table question
- Related podcasts stories to other classes
- Word “interest/interesting” used 64 times
- Pointed out sound usage

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: discovery, food writing/food media, defiance

Inductive codes: Enthusiasm, connection, technology, sophistication

If a professor's heart could be warmed by student work, this discussion assignment would do it. From one: "I'm taking a civil rights movement class and I hadn't heard about this side of the movement, the hostesses. I think this is really fascinating too!" and another, "...I want to note that it's cool how such big concepts, again, like Civil Rights, play in to such small occurrences like cooking and sharing meals together." That they made connection between food and social movements/issues and were also able to relate it to work in other classes shows me that they are interacting with the curriculum favorably. In general, their ideas and the writing showed knowledge and for the most part openness. Their biggest complaints were that some of the topics just weren't interesting. Two of the three pods were boozy and while tequila seemed to be more familiar, bourbon was not except to the person from Kentucky. Again, I assumed they knew more. That said, I do feel successful that these podcasts introduced them to something new or added more to what they already knew. "All in all, these three podcasts were very diverse, but they all made me realize that everything we consume has a story." This is great revelation. I also want them to constantly be thinking that someone has to tell that story. And that storyteller can be a journalist. It's what journalists do. I could be better at guiding them to that.

Discussion: Travel by Podcast

Spring 2018, 23 responses

Discussion prompt: We often have the idea that travel journalism/media is about cheap airfare, good places to stay and sights not to miss. These podcasts about food in other places challenge that notion. The most intriguing travel stories tell something about the culture and might just prompt the reader/listener to get on a plane. What about these podcasts that intertwine food with culture piqued your interest about going to these places? (Or didn't.) What did you learn about the culture through the food that lets you be an armchair traveler? On a side note, there seems to be a real lack of these kinds of podcasts. Maybe an opportunity? I'd love to hear your ideas about a travel/food podcast. What would be your dream food/travel podcast to produce?

Observation jottings:

- Questioning American culture. Is there such a thing?
- Description of food making travel tempting
- Their youth and experience shows about travel
- Most dream of it, though haven't done a lot
- Why not travel and food in the U.S. a few ask
- Appreciative of the power of storytelling
- Show a lack of knowledge about world cultures
- Expensive KFC in Pakistan resonates as funny

More observations/analysis

Deductive codes: Relationships, first experiences, discovery

Inductive codes: Confidence, media familiarity, call to action

The phrase “to each his own” is an apt description of the student work. Some want to travel the world, several don’t ever want to leave the country. Each of the three podcasts had fans in the students. I am glad that I chose podcasts from countries that they were less familiar with: Israel, Nepal and Pakistan. There was not much connection which I have found with other podcasts. One student had a high school friend from Nepal, another was Jewish and talked of visiting Israel on a Birthright trip. This assignment told me more about the students than it told them about themselves. The already knew whether they liked travel or not. There were only a few comments about journalism and storytelling. It appeared that the stories themselves were so foreign to them that they didn’t get around to realizing that there were journalists at work. I could have done better guiding them. It was successful in that I did want to them to learn something about other cultures. Unsuccessful in that they didn’t much think about the ways the stories were told or how the podcasts might have even been produced. Of course, I didn’t ask them either. I had a difficult time finding podcasts in this genre and didn’t repeat the assignment in 2019. I found confidence in their responses as they were sure in what they liked/disliked about travel. There was also a sense that while American culture seemed vague, it was also worthy of study or pride.

Discussion: Pod Save Diversity

Spring 2019, 26 responses

Discussion prompt: A reminder: The more thorough and deep you go on your response to the prompt, the better your group discussion will be. I will be looking at this this week when I give points.

There are many podcasts that address diversity, plus the politics surrounding food. I picked the podcasts this week because, well, mostly I think they are interesting. Tell the group which one you found most interesting (and that includes entertaining) and why. Are there serious topics about food that you think would make a good podcast? Share two ideas. (Before you do, hunt around the Internet to see if they already exist. If they do, share the links, please.)

Observation jottings:

- Questioning American culture. Is there such a thing?
- Seem to classify podcasts as education or entertaining; when they are both it’s a surprise
- Another eye-opening week about the genre
- One student speaks out against undocumented immigrants getting government help
- Students sympathetic to struggling people; strong sense of empathy
- Fans equally of all the podcast subjects
- Not much discussion of journalism
- Students showed vulnerability in their personal reactions

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Relationships, discovery

Inductive codes: Confidence, sophistication, call to action, call to action, connection, media familiarity

This collection of podcasts resonated strongly with the students. The combination of the

podcast topics, socio-political issues in the country and other classes they were taking (NNB, political science) created a strong impact. The responses showed knowledge of current events and confidence in their beliefs. The journalistic/production values were not mentioned much, except for the music in one of the podcasts. Even though I hadn't planned this, these podcasts took the place of the travel podcasts from the previous years in that they spoke to the ways food intersects with culture, political and socioeconomic issues. This is another example of how current technology paired with current events can excite students and make them dig deep on their own beliefs. I wish I had gotten them to think more about the journalism but it's a win that they saw how "food" podcasts could tackle serious topic. This particular class has good chemistry and this discussion sample was indicative of the serious thinking they did all semester.

Appendix E: Food Writing Raw Data Observations

Personal Food Essays

2014, 15 essays:

Assignment: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience from your past. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate at last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate on vacation. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. Build on last week's exercise on using lively, active words. File on Canvas.

Observation jottings:

- Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grandpa figure prominently
- There is mention of Christmas, Easter, birthdays
- The word "first" is used many times, especially in regard to the first time a food is tried, first time ordering something or first time eating in another country
- Remembrances of travel
- Evocative
- Chronological storytelling
- Reverence for food interest
- Vagueness about places, i.e., exact cities

Deductive codes: Relationships, food interest

Inductive codes: Sophistication, connection, storytelling

2015, 16 essays

Assignment: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate at last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate on vacation. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. Build on last week's exercise on using lively, active words. THIS IS A FIRST-PERSON ESSAY.

Observation jottings:

- Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grandpa figure prominently
- Remembrances of travel
- Evocative and chronological storytelling
- Connection with the past
- Foods that evoke experiences (avocado, floor chicken, best food after we almost died)
- Using food to elevate the everyday
- A sense of freedom in the writing. It's like they are having fun.
- Evocative storytelling

- Chronological writing
- Cathartic element to the writing

Deductive codes: Relationships, food interest

Inductive codes: Sophistication, storytelling, enthusiasm

2016, 18 essays:

Assignment: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience from your past. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate at last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate on vacation. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. Build on Week 2's exercise on using lively, active words. File on Canvas. Grammar, punctuation, spelling count.

Observation jottings:

- Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grandpa figure prominently
- Stories of plenty
- Reverence for food interest
- Thanksgiving
- Immigrant/ethnic experiences
- Cooking as competition
- Humor
- Evocative storytelling
- Chronological writing
- Cathartic element to the writing
- A sense of freedom in the writing. It's like they are having fun.

Deductive codes: Relationships, food interest, , food interest

Inductive codes: Sophistication, , storytelling, enthusiasm

2017, 20 essays:

Assignment: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience from your past. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate at last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate on vacation. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. Build on Week 2's exercise on using lively, active words. File on Canvas. Grammar, punctuation, spelling count.

Observation jottings:

- Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grandpa figure prominently
- Food and travel
- Immigrant/ethnic experiences
- Stories of plenty
- Evocative storytelling
- Chronological writing
- Cathartic element to the writing
- Reverence for food interest

Deductive codes: Relationships, food interest

Inductive codes: Sophistication, , storytelling, enthusiasm

2018, 22 essays:

Assignment: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience from your past. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate anywhere. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. You could write about the significant other who dumped you at Chick-Fil-A. Or maybe that your mother is a terrible cook or how you hate a popular food (pumpkin spike, tuna poke, avocado toast, fried chicken) that everyone else loves and how you feel judged ... or don't.

Build on Week 2's exercise on using lively, active words. Tell a story. Grammar, punctuation, spelling count.

Observation jottings:

- Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grandpa figure prominently
- Food and travel
- Immigrant/ethnic experiences
- Stories of plenty
- Evocative storytelling
- Chronological writing
- Cathartic element to the writing
- Reverence for food interest

Deductive codes: Relationships, food interest, , food interest

Inductive codes: Sophistication, , storytelling, enthusiasm

2019, 29 essays:

Assignment: Write a 600- to 700-word essay on a memorable food experience from your past. This can be about a favorite childhood dish or something you ate last week. It can be about something you cooked or the best thing you ever ate anywhere. Remember, food memories don't always have to be positive. You could write about the significant other who dumped you at Chick-Fil-A. Or maybe that your mother is a terrible cook or how you hate a popular food (pumpkin spike, tuna poke, avocado toast, fried chicken, acai bowls) that everyone else loves and how you feel judged ... or don't.

Build on Week 2's exercise on using lively, active words. Tell a story. Grammar, punctuation, style count.

Observation jottings:

More of the same as above. Saturation.

Deductive codes: Relationships, food interest, , food interest

Inductive codes: Sophistication, storytelling, enthusiasm

From my methodology chapter, page 41

“I have been disappointed at the lack of creativity. There is a disconnect between my assignment, the readings and the student work. I look forward to understanding why.”

More observations/analysis:

After reading the essays: Did I expect to be entertained and enlightened the way I am when I read the work of a professional writer? I didn't not realize until I re-read them how the exercise seemed to be cathartic for many of the students. Some were taking what they need. Also, in the run up to the assignment, I didn't draw attention to effective ways to tell stories. Thus, they told them chronologically, often not recognizing that so much of the story was superfluous, even boring. My lecture on Marcel Proust and the Madeleine moment led them to believe it had to be some monumental, sweeping story about their childhood. Also, there were few stories, none really, about going without, which is surprising knowing that of the 200-plus students, some of them must have grown up in homes with economic and other challenges. In Pinellas County, where USFSP is situated, one in four children is food insecure meaning they don't know where their next meal is coming from. Why didn't some of these stories surface? There were plenty of stories of plenty.

End-of-semester assessments

Assignment is the same for all semesters: Write at least 300 words on what you learned about food writing this semester. Address any element of the class, be it writing or simply the breadth of the topic. Tell me how and if your perception about food writing has changed since the first week. Cite at least two readings (books, articles, etc.) that contributed to the ways in which you think about food writing now.

Also, I would like to know what element/topic of the class that resonated with you most.

Fall 2014, 15 submissions

Observation jottings:

- Unclear before class started what it would be about
- **Or** thought it would be easy or about recipes/reviews/cooking only
- Wished it was face-to-face
- Surprised at broad scope of food writing
- Felt other writing was improved through exercises
- They would never have read book selections on their own but connected with them

Deductive codes: Surprise, expectations, discovery

Inductive codes: Enthusiasm, pre-conceived notions, storytelling, group think, media familiarity

Fall 2015, none (face to face and we did the assessment in class through discussion)

Fall 2016, 18 submissions:

Observation jottings:

- Surprised at broad scope of food writing
- Exercises helped improve other writing

- Learned more about voice and POV
- See journalism of this sort as more fun
- Discussions helped them get to know each other
- Thought food writing was about recipes/reviews/cooking only
- Unclear before class started what it would be about
- They would never have read book selections on their own but connected with them

Deductive codes: Surprise, expectations, discovery, Relationships

Inductive codes: Enthusiasm, pre-conceived notions, storytelling, group think

Fall 2017, 19 submissions:

Observation jottings:

- Thought food writing was easy; surprised at the depth of knowledge/work
- Thought food writing was about recipes/reviews/cooking only
- Unclear before class started what it would be about
- Discussions helped them get to know each other better
- They would never have read book selections on their own but connected with them
- Exercises helped improve writing over all
- Surprise at food stories that covered more serious topics

Deductive codes: Surprise, expectations, discovery, Relationships

Inductive codes: Enthusiasm, pre-conceived notions, storytelling, group think

Fall 2018, 26 submissions:

Observation jottings:

- Thought food writing was easy; surprised at the depth of knowledge/work
- Thought food writing was about recipes/reviews/cooking only
- Unclear before class started what it would be about
- They would never have read book selections on their own but connected with them
- Exercises helped improve writing over all
- Surprise at food stories that covered more serious topics
- Understand the idea of food appropriation now
- Food writing as activism a new concept
- Several thought this might be a good career path for them

Deductive codes: Surprise, expectations, discovery

Inductive codes: Enthusiasm, pre-conceived notions, storytelling, group think

Fall 2019, 20 submissions

Observation jottings:

- More aware of food appropriation than students in previous semesters
- Thought food writing was easy; surprised at the depth of knowledge/work
- Thought food writing was about recipes/reviews/cooking only
- Unclear before class started what it would be about

- They would never have read book selections on their own but connected with them; several quotes from the books
- Comments about the intersection of journalism/food writing

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Surprise, expectations, discovery

Inductive codes: Enthusiasm, pre-conceived notions, sophistication, group think, call to action

The group discussions help build community but how the groups are formed is random. I let the CMS do that. I was struck by the comments about how they enjoyed each other and got to know each other in ways they normally wouldn't in an online class. Also, the comments about the books go back to the literature about using food memoir/books being underutilized in classes. I find they often make comments about getting to read something "interesting" rather than a textbook. Comments are overwhelmingly positive which makes me wonder what they really think. Everything so positive? "Group think" comes into play in the group chats, too. 2017 was the first time addressing food appropriation and this was a new concept to them. In an effort to stop relying too heavily on discussions, this assignment became a short essay turned in for my eyes only in 2018. They seemed more serious than in previous semesters. Did they feel freer to write for one set of eyes only? Is it good or bad that they don't know what the class is about when they register? Why do they take it?? No group think so it's significant that most of them mentioned the assigned books and how they liked them, commenting that they would never read them on their own. This speaks to my connoisseurship. Does food writing have a PR problem? Dozens of students thought it was pretty frivolous stuff going in. The 2019 responses were also for my eyes only rather than the small group and again, seemed more serious and thoughtful. A different experience? Many comments about how they connected with the books and didn't usually get to read things like this. Another connection to the literature about non-fiction books. ... The assignments have changed as I have changed and gone back to school. I incorporated some of the exercises (poems!) that I did in Qual I and II with Leia Cain. They spoke to my creative side. Do the students get more out of the class and I learn more?? This batch of readings shows how I have evolved too.

Book Reflections

Tender at the Bone, Fall 2014, 15 reflections

Assignment: Write a 600- to 700-word reflection on *Tender at the Bone*. Ruth Reichl's book kicked off the modern food memoir genre. Why do you think it struck such a chord with readers? Did it make you think about the part food played in your home as you were growing up? Discuss how Reichl uses food to discuss the dynamics of her family. These are just prompts to get you thinking. Your essay can address other topics. File on Canvas.

Observation jottings:

- The darker parts of her childhood stood out
- Easily related their own food memories
- Liked the book
- Recognized the humor and the way food was used to drive to the story
- Alternately felt sorry for author or her mother

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Relationships, food interest

Inductive codes: Sophistication, connection

Obvious they read the book. Felt it necessary to give a paragraph or two of the plot, probably to show they had read the book. Followed prompt pretty much to the letter. No one veered off of that. The word ‘related’ was used in multiple reflections. Their reflections showed enjoyment of the book. Not one student wrote that they didn’t like it. In general, I felt like they connected with the book and had a deeper understanding of how writing about food is a way to write about culture and history.

BETWEEN FALL 2014 AND FALL 2015, WE HAD THE DIVERSITY TRAINING WITH DR. LILLIAN DUNLAP. THIS CHANGED THE WAY I SELECTED READINGS TO INCLUDE MORE DIVERSITY.

Fortune Cookie Chronicles, Fall 2015, 14 reflections

Assignment: Write a 600- to 700-word reflection on *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles: Adventures in the World of Chinese Food* by Jennifer 8. Lee. What surprised you most about her book? Have any of you been to China (or another country) and noted that the Chinese food there wasn’t much like the Chinese food in America? What does Lee’s book tell us about how food changes to fit cultures?

Observation jottings:

- Word “surprised” came up in more than half of the essays
- Several comments on the level of research
- Included references and quotes from the book
- The prompt was not followed strictly
- Writers took opportunity to tell their own connection with Chinese food
- Mentioned Jewish-Chinese food connection

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Discovery, surprise, food interest

Inductive codes: Preconceived notions

This is likely a book that none of them would have read on their own. Their reflections showed that most of them didn’t know much about the evolution of Chinese food specifically or Asian culture in general. For this reason, I felt the assignment of the book was a success to broaden their horizons. I also chose it specifically because Jennifer 8. Lee was a journalist. The prompt went over their heads I think. What did I really want them to get out of it other than a glimpse into another culture? I wanted them to see how a journalist melds research with writing, but the prompt didn’t pinpoint that. Some of the reflections read to me like there wasn’t a thorough read of the book and I came to this conclusion because they expressed their own opinions a lot.

Yes, Chef, Fall 2016, 16 reflections

Assignment: A 600- to 700-word reflection on *Yes, Chef* by Marcus Samuelsson. You can

approach the reflection as a book review or as your reaction to the book. You may cite other sources, too. I am looking for critical thinking about how food has shaped Samulesson's life.

Observation jottings:

- Many mentioned birth mother comparison to berbere spice
- Sadness over death of his mother; that part of his story touched them
- Several mentioned seeing themselves in his struggles and dedication to overcome them
- Only three mentioned his experiences as a black man/chef.
- Included references and quotes from the book
- I was not sure if they liked the book
- Writing styles more like a book report

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Discovery, surprise, relationships, food interest

Inductive codes: Preconceived notions, media familiarity

My vague prompt resulted in reflections that were all over the place. Mostly, they provided thorough recounting of the book. I was quite sure they had read the book but less sure that they reflected on how they felt about his journey. Some mentioned that but since I didn't ask for it... Also, only three of the essays talked about race which was something else that I wanted them to consider. How did he feel he fit in the world as a person with such a varied cultural upbringing. What did this make them think about their own lives. None of this was asked by me. Also, this book was likely not written by him but rather his co-author. In that respect, it may not have been the best "food writing" example for a journalistic study of food writing. Still, I am glad that I was able to introduce him and his story to them because it introduced them to a person whose story was unfamiliar and new to them. They understand the Africa to America story, but by way of Sweden was new. Many new of Samuelsson from *Top Chef* but didn't know his background.

The Cooking Gene, Fall 2017, 16 reflections

Assignment: A 600- to 700-word reflection on *The Cooking Gene* by Michael Twitty. You can approach the reflection as a book review or as your reaction to the book. You may cite other sources, too.

Observation jottings:

- Relevance
- Eye opening; interesting; truth
- Evidence that book has been read
- Several reference to politics of the time (Trump election)
- New information to some about history of slavery
- A lot packed into book; hard to keep names straight
- The writing in general was good; sophisticated

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Discovery, surprise, relationships

Inductive codes: Connection, preconceived notions, media familiarity, call to action

I hadn't thought about this at the time, but this book was read in the first year of Trump's presidency. Race and immigration was on their minds because of the president's policies. This was a good time to read this book. Many students commented that they wouldn't have thought about connecting race to food, or as a way to trace heritage. Despite the lack of instruction on the prompt, the essays showed deep levels of thinking. What was the difference? They had done a week of readings on diversity before so maybe this set the stage. There was also relevance to what was going on in the news (back to race and immigration issues). As I read their work, I thought that Twitty's story taught them more about slavery and race than they previously knew. It sort of snuck up on them through the lens of food.

Buttermilk Graffiti, Fall 2018, 26 reflections

Assignment: Write a 600-word reflection on *Buttermilk Graffiti* by chef Edward Lee. You can approach the reflection as a book review or as your reaction to the book. You may cite other sources, too. I am looking for evidence that you did the Week 12 readings and how what you learned from them might have influenced your thoughts about the book.

Observation jottings:

- Representation; several reflections noted they saw their own experience in Lee's
- The writing in general was good; sophisticated
- Lots of comments about the chapter on Ramadan/Dearborn, Mich.
- Tapped into the romantic notion of traveling the country
- Evidence the book had been read
- Lots of comments about his storytelling
- Noticed that lack of photos made readers focus on words
- Showing understanding of immigrant vs. ethnic food
- Lee's writing style was straightforward and he told the stories in relatable, non-traditional ways. It wasn't all sugary-sweet.

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Discovery, surprise, relationships

Inductive codes: Preconceived notions, media familiarity, connection, media familiarity, call to action

The timing of the assignment of the book dovetailed with weeks where we studied diversity in food writing and the idea of food appropriation. This helped them synthesize Lee's message. The reflections addressed whether it was appropriate for Lee to provide (or make money) from using other people's recipes. This showed that they were paying attention to the other readings, but also that they were using critical thinking skills. Most agree it was okay because he gave a lot of credit to the people who inspired him. He clearly was telling stories. The book also spoke to many students' desires to travel and write about it, a la Anthony Bourdain. The assignment of this book did what I wanted it to do: bust open some stereotypes and show them how different stories can be when told from a diverse point of view. There were a lot of comments on specific chapters. This book allows readers to jump around because each chapter is

a different journey. They liked that. It felt to them like they were reading a shorter book.

Notes from a Young Black Chef, Fall 2019, 22

Assignment: A 600- to 700-word reflection on *Notes from a Young Black Chef* by Kwame Onwuachi (Knopf, 2019) You can approach the reflection as a book review or as your reaction to the book. You may cite other sources, too. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling count. A reflection can be first person; a review cannot be first person. If you have questions about this, reach out to me. (Included in assignment was a short lecture on the difference between a reflection and a review)

Observation jottings:

- The writing in general was good, free of punctuation, etc., errors
- For the most part, evidence the book had been read. One was superficial enough that it could have been mashed together from reviews, etc .
- Representation. Students saw their experiences either as BIPOC or as restaurant workers or both.
- Recognized a connection with their own roots/culture.
- One of 22 said books was a favorite; many more effusive about their love of it.
- Surprise that book showed the good, bad and ugly of Onwuachi's life.
- They felt emotional about all his tribulations and triumphs.
- Tried to surmise what book was about by title.
- Commentary about racism in America; some of them have experienced what he did.
- Word/concept of "racism" used/addressed 28 times. Compared with *Cooking Gene* (3) or *Yes, Chef* (0) or *Fortune Cookie* (0) or *Buttermilk Graffiti* (0). *Yes, Chef* had three mentions of race.

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Surprise, relationships, discovery

Inductive codes: Preconceived notions, enthusiasm, connection, call to action

Reflection due Week 7, before Food as Activism or Diverse Voices in Food writing. They read this book in September/October 2019 when the Black Lives Matter movement was gaining favor after a period of negative response from non-BIPOC. I wonder if this affected their responses because many talked about systemic racism and how they were saddened at the way the chef was treated. I felt like this book hit a chord with them more than any others. It might be because of the chef's age, just 27, he is closer to their age. The timing too with social justice, BLM, might have played a factor. This book also backs up the literature that says non-fiction is underutilized. It seemed to speak to them in personal ways. It introduced them to a new kind of memoir ... not just an older, established person writing about their journey but a younger person whose life story, though still evolving, was interesting. I actually felt emotional when reading them because they got out of it what I wanted them too. Yes, it was an example of food writing but they made deeper connections to their own lives (some talked about difficult home lives) and to society as a whole. I WAS TAKING CRT WHEN THEY READ THIS BOOK. Feeling strong about McCutcheon statement: "Theorists call for teachers to tailor their curriculum to students, local conditions, relevant matters." I do this as a connoisseur.

Diversity Webinar Responses

2016, 16 responses

Assignment: The intro: If you didn't listen to "Building a Bigger Table" live, go to <http://www.spfw.org/webinars> to register and listen. It's about 90 minutes.

Panelists: Toni Tipton-Martin, David Leite, Elissa Altman, Michael Twitty, and Francis Lam

Panelists will discuss how diverse voices may be brought to the food writing table, and how each has made her or his own mark on food writing. They will discuss the importance of networking and of leveraging opportunities, as well as how to reach a wide audience amidst a sea of culinary stars, whether writing about the food of one's own roots or about local and sustainable food. This session aims to generate answers to the pressing question: *How can the community of food writers and editors work together to nurture diversity and to create a welcoming, open space for all food storytellers in all forms and formats?*

Discussion prompt: The Professional Food Writers Symposium gave us a chance to hear from some big names in food writing. If you don't know much about them, take some time to research them on the Internet. They are making big waves and opening eyes. After listening to them and reading this week's selections, please answer these two prompts.

1. How did the content of the webinar and/or the readings change the way you think about how popular food writing addresses the ethnic heritage of food and who has a right to tell it those stories? What did you hear/read that was new to you?
2. Michael Twitty said "If we can't sit at the table, we will knock the legs off of it." What did he mean by that?

Observation jottings:

- Self-identifying ethnicity/race
- "Cultural appropriation" was a more familiar concept than "food appropriation"
- Attributing through research "knock the legs off the table" quote to Civil Rights activist James Foreman
- Surprise at how few BIPOC were getting book contracts
- First time thinking about food connected to social movements/justice
- Admission that concept of who gets to cook whose food is complex
- David Leite's story of being rejected to write about Portuguese food resonated
- Lots of agreement; cordialness

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Surprise, relationships, confusion

Inductive codes: Call to action, preconceived notions, enthusiasm, group think

As an introduction to the idea of food and social movements/justice, this assignment was a success at least on a surface level. The assignment could have been more detailed to get more from them. There was a lot of agreement and I suspect they were being polite. This can be an emotionally charged topic but from the responses everyone seemed on the same page. Several

students said they never realized that chefs/food writers of color would feel this way or that there was discrimination in that field. This backs up the literature that food can be used to jumpstart good conversations. It occurs to me as I write this that rather than grade their responses after the fact, I should jump in and stir the pot a bit. They don't really know how to respond sometimes other than to say racism is bad (or some such.) The Webinar came to my attention after the semester started and I thought it was a good way for them to get more immersed in the topic. It was 90 minutes and it was clear from the discussion posts that not all attended or listened to it. There were four stories on the reading list and not one person referenced the last one ("The Family Peach Farm That Became A Symbol Of The Food Revolution?" by Dan Charles, NPR). My guess is no one got that far. This was a good start that could have gone further.

Food Writing as Activism Response

Fall 2018, 26 responses

Assignment: Select one of this week's readings to write about but **please read them all first to get a good idea of the breadth of topics in this genre of food writing.** Tell me which story you selected and what drew you to it. What did you learn? Consider how journalistic writing intersects with food writing here. Four longish paragraphs.

- Bryce Oats, Civileats.com, "In Farm Country, Grappling With the Taboo of Talking about Climate Change"
- Kim Severson, *New York Times*, "Food Writing in the #MeToo Era"
- Christine Huang, Civileats.com, "Queer in the Kitchen: Gender Politics Take Front Stage"
- Gabriel Thompson, Serioseats.com "Chasing the Harvest: It Used to be Only Men Who Did This Job"
- Eleanor Sontag, *Washington Post*, "To This Black Lives Matter Founder, Activism Begins in the Kitchen"

Observation jottings:

- Comments of generational differences (#metoo)
- They saw themselves
- Recognition of journalism's place in food writing
- Some in-depth writing though too many quick hits
- More surprise at the depth of food writing
- Stories picked by headlines
- Stories picked because of personal interest
- Surprise to see words like "sexual harassment" and "racism" and "climate change" and "immigration" in food stories.

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Surprise, food writing/food media, first experience

Inductive codes: Call to action, preconceived notions, enthusiasm, confidence, connection

This assignment cemented my theory of using food as a jumping off point for difficult conversations. It also showed how the study of popular media can excite students. Because the

work is contemporary, it feels more relevant. I allowed them to mix interpretation with their own experiences and that seems to be satisfying. RELEVANCE played a part in this assignment. My assignment was fairly vague and I think a stronger prompt might have alleviated some of the superficial responses. The #metoo story has the most response (10); followed by BLM founder (6), queer in the kitchen (5), climate change (3) and chasing the harvest (2). Many of the students in this class (and many in most of my classes) have food service industry experience. In this class, 21 of the 29 students were female, so it made sense that many had stories of sexual harassment. One student thought the #Metoo movement had been overblown. The writer was female. Should this class be called food journalism? Me Too movement started in 2006 but gained more prominence in 2017 and hit a crescendo in 2018. Oscars addressed it.

Fall 2019, 19 responses

Assignment: Select one of this week's readings to write about but please read them all first to get a good idea of the breadth of topics in this genre of food writing. Tell me which story you selected and what drew you to it. What did you learn? Consider how journalistic writing intersects with food writing here. Four longish paragraphs.

- Bryce Oats, Civileats.com, "In Farm Country, Grappling With the Taboo of Talking about Climate Change"
- Kim Severson, New York Times, "Food Writing in the #MeToo Era"
- Christine Huang, Civileats.com, "Queer in the Kitchen: Gender Politics Take Front Stage"
- Gabriel Thompson, Serouseats.com "Chasing the Harvest: It Used to be Only Men Who Did This Job"

Observation jottings:

- Comments of generational differences (#metoo)
- They saw themselves
- Strong connection with journalism (even quoting Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics)
- Stories picked by headlines
- Stories picked because of personal interest
- Telling personal stories
- More understanding of the breadth of food journalism

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Surprise, relationships, food writing/food media

Inductive codes: Call to action, preconceived notions, enthusiasm, media familiarity

I used these stories for a second year because I felt they still would resonate. The #metoo story was the top choice (10), followed by Queer in the Kitchen (6), BLM (4), climate change (2) and chasing the harvest (1). The class make up was 23 students with three males. Some of the same themes came up for this class, though there was more commentary on the connection of journalism to food writing. "Voice to the voiceless" and "tell diverse stories" were both quotes from the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics. Both of these assignments from 2018 and 2019, speak to the "untaught" lessons. They never expected heading into this course to

be relaying their own stories of discrimination. For at least one, she was able to put words to what had happened to her. (This would be a group that would be great to do a focus group with.) I also suspect that other classes in mass communication (reporting plus ethics) help them to talk about the journalistic merits of the stories. Things are coming together.

Discussion: Food Appropriation

Fall 2017, 19 responses

Discussion prompt: What does the phrase “food appropriation” mean to you? Had you heard of the term before this week’s readings? In what ways do you think food writers might perpetuate some of the stereotypes surrounding certain foods and how we refer to them?? For instance, what is ethnic food and why do we make that distinction?

- “Why everyone should stop calling “immigrant food” ethnic food” by [Lavanya Ramanathan](#), *Washington Post*
- “Dispelling the Myths of Southern Food with John T. Edge” by Leslie Pariseau, *Saveur*
- “Why We Can’t Talk about Race in Food,” *CivilEats.com*
- “We are Having the Wrong Conversation about Food and Cultural Appropriate,” by Dakota Kim, *Paste*
- “When Chefs Become Famous Cooking Other Culture’s Food” by Mary Goody, *NPR*

Observation jottings:

- Making connection to their own lives (family stories, observations)
- Racism against white people
- Conversation with group mates more robust. More than just pat on the back but actually adding another comment spurred by the post
- Mention of privilege
- The more detailed the post was, the better the conversation
- Lack of understanding of the concept
- Most never heard of food appropriation and some not even cultural appropriation

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Surprise, relationships, confusion, defiance

Inductive codes: Preconceived notions, enthusiasm, connection

I didn’t prepare them enough for this assignment. There was only one student who mentioned economics, which is at the core of “food appropriation.” It is about who gets to make money from whose food and also who gets bank loans to open restaurants. How would they have known that? I jumped in too fast. One of the discussion groups (there were five) was critical of the concept, with one student writing that the concept was racism against white people to say that they couldn’t make food from other cultures. No one in that group has heard of either cultural or food appropriation. There was some indignation in this group and a bit in others that people were being told what they could and could not cook. It was clear that some students didn’t do the readings, or perhaps just one. Those were the responses that relied heavily on gut reactions to the

terms. There were comments on the difficulty of understanding how some people were offended by the term “ethnic” food. Those students didn’t do the readings. Most students, except in that one group, were open to learning about food appropriation and why the phrase “ethnic food” is falling out of favor. Still, others found the definition and the issue altogether “squishy” as one student wrote.

Fall 2018, 29 responses

Assignment: There are a lot of readings this week, though most are fairly short. You will need to read them all to really understand the issue of “food appropriation.” I will be looking for evidence that you have done this in your response to the prompt.

Discussion prompt: What does the phrase “food appropriation” mean to you? Had you heard of the term before this week’s readings? In what ways do you think food writers might perpetuate some of the stereotypes surrounding certain foods and how we refer to them?? For instance, what is “ethnic food” and why do we make that distinction, especially in a nation of immigrants that is becoming increasingly diverse.

- “Why everyone should stop calling “immigrant food” ethnic food” by [Lavanya Ramanathan](#), *Washington Post*
- “Why We Can’t Talk about Race in Food,” [CivilEats.com](#)
- “We are Having the Wrong Conversation about Food and Cultural Appropriate,” by Dakota Kim, *Paste*
- “When Chefs Become Famous Cooking Other Culture’s Food” by Mary Goody, *NPR*
- “Adrian Miller: Love, Peace and Sooooooul Food” by Toni Tipton-Martin on her blog, *The Jemima Code*
- “I had Never Eaten in Ghana. But My Ancestors Had” by Michael Twitty, writing in *Bon Appetit* magazine.
- “Diverse Identities are Central to Food Writing” by Nik Sharma, writing on Dianne Jacob’s blog

Observation jottings:

- First time “Latinx” used. Three instances.
- Several felt attacked personally by the writers
- Celebration of cultures via food is a good thing
- People should be able to make whatever they want to
- Credit should be given to chefs of specific cultures
- “Ethnic food” as a lazy description
- “Ethnic food” as a normalized description
- “Ethnic food” as unfamiliar
- “Food is food” mentioned several times
- The co-opting of economic opportunities
- Food appropriation as a new concept

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Surprise, relationships, confusion, defiance

Inductive codes: Call to action, preconceived notions, enthusiasm, sophistication

White privilege is on display in these responses. Indignant over anyone telling them what kind of food they can cook. Only a couple mentioned the economics. The fact that BIPOC are much less likely to get business loans was part of my 12-minute lecture. A few mentioned something from it. Did they watch it? I tried to prepare them better than the year before so there weren't blindsided by the topic. Now thinking we need a glossary. While I think this topic ruffled some feathers, it also planted a seed of cultural sensitivity regarding food. There was some recognition that we don't call food from Europe "ethnic" and that the term is usually reserved for food cooked by people with brown/black skin. One self-identified African American student wrote about the appropriation of Black culture in clothing. "A white girl with puffy, pouty lips, wearing pink clip-in extensions is 'edgy' and 'fashionable' while a black girl doing something very similar is 'ghetto' and 'extra.'" This student turned her comments in late so there was no response from her group.

Fall 2019, 20 responses

Assignment: There are a lot of readings this week, though most are fairly short. You will need to read them all to really understand the issue of "food appropriation." I will be looking for evidence that you have done this in your response to the prompt.

Discussion prompt: What does the phrase "food appropriation" mean to you? Had you heard of the term before this week's readings? In what ways do you think food writers might perpetuate some of the stereotypes surrounding certain foods and how we refer to them?? For instance, what is "ethnic food" and why do we make that distinction, especially in a nation of immigrants that is becoming increasingly diverse.

- "Why everyone should stop calling "immigrant food" ethnic food" by [Lavanya Ramanathan](#), *Washington Post*
- "Why We Can't Talk about Race in Food," [CivilEats.com](#)
- "We are Having the Wrong Conversation about Food and Cultural Appropriate," by [Dakota Kim](#), *Paste*
- "When Chefs Become Famous Cooking Other Culture's Food" by [Mary Goody](#), *NPR*
- "Adrian Miller: Love, Peace and Sooooooul Food" by [Toni Tipton-Martin](#) on her blog, *The Jemima Code*
- "I had Never Eaten in Ghana. But My Ancestors Had" by [Michael Twitty](#), writing in *Bon Appetit* magazine.
- "Diverse Identities are Central to Food Writing" by [Nik Sharma](#), writing on [Dianne Jacob's](#) blog

Observation jottings:

- Blame food writers for lazy stereotypes
- Ethnic food used when people don't know anything about cuisine
- Articles forced look at unpleasant truths
- "Disheartening" articles

- Discussion of “authentic” as a way to other. First time “otherness” brought up.
- Connection with personal experiences; shopping in “ethnic” aisle
- Conflicting feelings about concept
- Self-described multi-racial backgrounds. (Mother half Indian; mother half Mexican)
- Food writers vs. bloggers vs. social media posters
- Evidence they have read and thought about the articles
- The co-opting of economic opportunities
- Food appropriation as a new concept
- There was a few hints at the idea of “freedom” to do what we want as Americans

More observations/analysis

Deductive codes: Surprise, relationships, confused

Inductive codes: Call to action, enthusiasm, sophisticated, group think, sophistication

As a whole, the responses were sophisticated and deep-thinking. There was much evidence that they had read the articles because they cited them and several mentioned points from the short lecture that I did about “who gets to tell whose story.” One group got into a discussion about chains such as Outback, Panda Express, Popeye’s. Several students had worked in these places and questioned whether the developers have ever been to the places where the food originated. There was only one student who was ambivalent about the concept of food appropriation. I was reminded of “group think” here. There was a lot of agreement with the articles and an understanding of cultural appropriation and white privilege in general. White privilege was more in the news in fall 2019 so this make me think that outside influences/news fueled discussion and not just what was presented in class. My own thoughts on the subject led me to pick these articles. Were there articles with opposing viewpoints? As I reread this work in 2020, I am looking for those articles. Difficult to find until I googled “food appropriation is bull shit” after trying other words/phrases paired with food appropriation such an overly sensitive, opposition, not real. BS turned up some serious rants. Are the students more likely to post comments that they know are “right” and back up the perceived thinking of the teacher? Still, I am trying to get them thinking about their own experiences and those of others.

Farmers Market Vendor Profiles

Fall 2014, 13 (face to face class) profiles

Assignment: Farmers market profile: 700- to 900-word story on a food vendor/farmer at a local outdoor market. This should not be first-person.

Observation jottings:

- Drawn to interesting people
- Variety of people covered
- Spent time with vendors
- Colorful description of the scenes
- Show decent interview skills
- If sources talked about culture and family, student seemed to ask more.
- Included storytelling quotes from sources

- The articles read like they enjoyed themselves both at the interview and in the writing. (I think this because they are thorough.)
- Casual, comfortable writing

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Discovery, relationships, food writing/media

Inductive codes: Call to action, enthusiasm, storytelling, confidence

Though I didn't specify what type of vendor they needed to interview, students were drawn to those selling food for/with a purpose (raise \$ for a cause or organic) or those whose food had a cultural connection with vendor (knish, halal beef jerky, Mexican market fare, Italian pastries, Belgian waffles from a family recipe, New Orleans cuisine.) The quality of the pieces varied widely because some of the students hadn't taken many journalism classes. The assignment was skimpy and I suspect that I talked more in class about them because it was face-to-face I am a little surprised now as I read them after five years how interesting they are and how much students got into the assignment.

Fall 2015, 16 profiles

Assignment: This is a 600- to 800-word profile on a farmer or vendor at a Farmers Market (or simply an outdoor market). Your piece should be on someone who sells, produces or makes food (not soapmakers or tie-dye artists though dog food producers are okay!) When I read your story, it should be apparent that you've hung out with your subject for a while. I want to read about the environment around your subject's stall; put me there. You could also go to the where the person makes the food or pulls up the crops.

THIS IS NOT A FIRST-PERSON STORY!

This story should have at least two sources, your subject and someone else. That someone else could be a customer, an employee or a market manager. (Please include source's contact information at the bottom of the story in case I want to do any factchecking.)

When I am done reading our piece, I should know why your subject does what he/she does. What's special about the person? Background? How's business? How many markets does he sell at? How many hours a week does she put in? Some vendors use markets as a way to promote their bricks-and-mortars business, is this the case with yours?

Get to the market early to ask questions before it opens and gets busy. Get your subject's email or phone number so you can contact with further questions. **DO NOT** feel weird about follow-up questions.

Observation jottings:

- Spent time with vendors
- Colorful description of the scenes
- Show decent interview skills
- If sources talked about culture and family, student seemed to ask more.
- Included storytelling quotes from sources
- The articles read like they enjoyed themselves both at the interview and in the writing. (I

- think this because they are thorough assessments.)
- Casual, comfortable writing

More observations/analysis:

Deductive codes: Discovery, relationships, food writing/media

Inductive codes: Enthusiasm, connection, storytelling, confidence

I remember being frustrated with most of the articles because they didn't follow journalistic style. After 2015 semester, I discontinued this assignment out of my own frustration. I realize now that I've read them again, that I missed the boat on what the students got from this. For most, this was their first time at an outdoor market and they mostly picked ones that were close to where they lived. So they learned something about their communities. They also were forced to talk with someone they didn't know and practice their communication skills. From the information that they gleaned to put in the story, they succeeded here. They picked vendors whose products they liked: honey, jam, baked goods, mostly. This gave them a sense of control over the assignment. In that respect, they were all in. I was expecting a strong journalistic feature and many were not able to do that. There is no pre-req for this class and I now have a lot more non-journalism majors taking it. This assignment aligns strongly to literature in regard to Dewey's "collateral learning." The longer and more detailed assignment guided them better.