Chapter 2
Developing an “App-atitude” for Cooking: Helping Adults Promote Positive Cooking Skills With Children via Mobile Web-Based Accessible Media

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ABSTRACT

Food preparation for preschool and elementary school children is described from the perspective of enhancing cognition and learning through the use of mobile devices. While most children are too young to use a stove or slice with a knife, with proper guidance and simulated experiences through mobile devices, children can actively contribute to food choice, preparation, and knowledge while educators contribute knowledge from various academic areas. The kitchen can be a positive learning environment for the educator, the student, and potentially, people in the student’s household, as part of an effort to develop a positive attitude toward food preparation. Updated learning implications, more current apps, and cooking curriculum suggestions are provided, along with future research recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to provide theoretical guidelines and suggestions for mobile-media implementation within culinary cognition in the classroom. Several theoretical areas are to be examined around the term culinary cognition. Most relevant is the argument that feelings about cooking should be acknowledged and cooking
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practices made possible by technology should be considered. Learning is discussed within the terms of observing and interacting with mobile media, along with suggested curriculum features and apps. The challenge beyond the classroom for researchers and mobile-media developers is finding creative and cognitively appropriate ways to combat dislike for food preparation, while increasing the probability of a higher culinary and food-appreciative skill set within the United States, where early childhood obesity is on the rise (Ng et al., 2014). This chapter also aims to present technological applications, and examine the multifaceted relationship between children’s mobile technology and healthful food practices. It will address mobile technology in the context of learning from a cognitive perspective, for educators, parents, and educational consultants. Finally, the chapter seeks to define culinary cognition as the mental action or process of acquiring food-preparation knowledge and understanding through thoughts, experiences, and the senses as an instructional experience for educators inclusive of technology applications.

Considerable evidence supports the hypothesis that cooking can enhance one’s health and well-being (Brown et al., 2006; Kruger et al., 2006; Larson et al., 2006; Olvera et al., 2008; Rosenkranz, 2008). Liquori et al. (1998) showed that when children cooked with vegetables and whole grains in the classroom, they consumed the same kind of food when it was served in school lunches and Children who received only nutritional education did not eat the new food. In addition, evidence supports the hypothesis that nutritional television programs increase public awareness and food knowledge (Chew et al., 1995, 1998; Smith & George, 2001), yet these research studies were conducted with adults and young adults (Larson et al., 2006) and not with preschool or elementary school students. Thus, a curriculum that includes apps targeted specifically to young children, about healthy eating choices will undoubtedly promote changes in cooking skills and overall healthful food choices. (Fildes et al., 2014; Martinez et al., 2014; Peters et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2015; Wiggins, 2014; Woodruff & Kirby, 2013  You indicated you have newer references, right?). Traditionally, many children learn their eating habits and to cook at home. In some homes there may be limited or no exposure to quality food. Additionally, school-based recipes or mobile-device food or cooking applications which may be useful for learning about healthy food habits (Norman et al., 2015) are also rarely present in children’s lives. Therefore, much of this chapter offers valuable transferable mobile learning lessons to foster basic healthy eating habits, agency and cooking skills in young children.

Sadly, some families settle for fast food or other preprocessed alternatives, for convenience, to save money, marketing, or to have more time to spend with loved ones. Some parents are either not educated themselves around healthy food choices,
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