

CALL FOR CHAPTER PROPOSALS

Working Title: *Learning and Food in a Changing World*

This proposed edited volume will explore the intersection of learning and food both within and beyond the classroom, with the aim of learning our way out of our current unsustainable food system and learning our way in to more sustainable alternatives. Taking a broad pedagogical approach to the question of food, it will focus on learning and change in a number of key sites: schools, homes, communities, and social movements. Palgrave Macmillan has indicated strong interest in this book and will be reviewing the full proposal.

Editor

Jennifer Sumner, PhD
Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6 Canada

Submitting a Chapter Proposal

Chapter proposals should be 750 to 1000 words. In addition, please include a short bio/CV (two pages maximum). Email these documents to jennifer.sumner@utoronto.ca no later than August 31, 2014.

Contextual Overview

Food, like learning, is central to human existence. In the prescient words of Welsh and MacRae (1998, 242):

Food is a nexus for industry, rural/urban relations, global trade relations, domestic and social life, biological health, social belonging, celebration of community, paid and unpaid work, expressions of care, abuse of power, hunger strikes, fasts and prayer. Food is part of daily life at least as much as we are consumers and possibly more as we labour for either love or money.

Clearly, food is much more than simply fuel for the body – it carries deep social, cultural, economic and environmental implications that people are immersed in every day. And because food has long been associated with wealth and power (Friedmann 1993), it also intersects with questions of gender, race, class, ethnicity and imperialism. For all these reasons, food invites critical scrutiny from any field of academic endeavour that addresses its inherently interdisciplinary and complex subject matter.

Interest in food has burgeoned over the last twenty years for a number of reasons, beginning with the consolidation of the global corporate food system. This consolidation has resulted in

a suite of interconnected problems, including increased control over what we eat, the pervasive commodification of food and the spread of the so-called ‘Western diet’ – highly processed products laden with salt, sugar and fat. Under this system,

Food is no longer viewed first and foremost as a sustainer of life. Rather, to those who seek to command our food supply, it has become instead a major source of corporate cash flow, economic leverage, a form of currency, a tool of international politics, an instrument of power – a weapon! (Krebs 1992 in Millstone and Lang, 2003, p. 11).

In reaction to the increasing corporate control of this vital life need, a number of social movements have coalesced around the subject of food. For example, the organic movement challenges the environmental problems associated with the production of industrial food. The local food movement questions the distance that food now travels and champions food close to home. The slow food movement protests against the homogenizing tendencies of fast food. The food justice movement condemns the hunger associated with the global corporate food system. And the food sovereignty movement demands that peoples and nations should be able to choose their own foodways, instead of being forced (through mechanisms such as trade agreements) into the global corporate food system.

Hot on the heels of these food movements have come books and articles dedicated to food, led by authors like Michael Pollan, Eric Schlosser and Raj Patel. These popular publications have been followed by scholarly interest in this rising phenomenon. A number of academic disciplines have already recognized the importance of food – including sociology, geography, planning and history – spawning a host of textbooks, special journal issues and courses on the subject.

In short, food is one of the fastest growing areas of study in many fields, but education is just beginning to grapple with what Belasco (2007, 22) described as this “edible dynamic” (see for example Flowers and Swan 2012; Sumner 2008, 2013a, 2013b, 2014; Swan and Flowers 2014; Walter 2013). Such engagement is crucial, given the mounting evidence that our global corporate food system has become massively dysfunctional – for example, over one billion people in the world go hungry every day, while an equal number are overweight or obese. Faced with the environmental, social and economic problems associated with the global corporate food system, it is time to ask: what is the role of education? Does it merely promote adaptation to this dysfunctional system or can it encourage the kind of learning experiences that will contribute to much-needed change?

This edited volume will address these questions by exploring the intersection of learning and food both within and beyond the classroom. Taking a broad pedagogical approach, it will focus on learning and change in a number of key sites related to food: schools, home, community, and social movements. And keeping in mind that sustainability does not come naturally but must be learned (Sumner 2007), the ultimate aim of the book involves learning our way out of our current unsustainable food system and learning our way in to more sustainable alternatives.

Proposed Chapters

The following outline is meant to provide a framework for potential contributors. Each chapter proposal should identify where it will fit into this outline, present a summary of the proposed content, and include any other relevant material to help in the review of the proposal. In addition, I encourage potential contributors to think of other important issues and areas in need of further examination. This outline is meant to be a guide, and while all chapter proposals should engage with the three central topic areas – learning, food and sustainability – potential contributors will have their own approach to addressing the relevant subject areas.

LEARNING AND FOOD IN A CHANGING WORLD

INTRODUCTION

SECTION I: LEARNING AND FOOD IN THE SCHOOL

Schools can be toxic food environments, where cafeterias, tuck shops and vending machines, not to mention the fast food outlets that cluster nearby, offer an array of “edible food-like substances” (Pollan 2008, 1) that lure children into the Western diet. In response, some schools have put healthy food on the curriculum – redesigning their cafeteria menus, setting up school gardens and supporting alternative food initiatives.

Chapter 1: Learning and Food in School Lunch Programs

School lunch programs represent a flashpoint in the current ‘food wars.’ While some countries offer fresh organic food in their national lunch programs, others lack such programs or use them as a dumping ground for overproduction. In addition, many school cafeterias have either lost their cooking facilities and qualified staff or never had them in the first place, depending instead on reheating overly processed products that are high in calories and low in nutrients. What do children learn in this compromised foodscape? What creative options have been explored to address this problem? Are solutions linked to larger food issues? How do school lunch programs fit into sustainable food systems?

Chapter 2: Learning and Food in School Gardens

School gardens represent some of the most innovative pedagogical sites for learning *about* food and learning *through* food. They provide unparalleled opportunities for the kind of experiential learning that goes far beyond nutrition to encompass such outcomes as increased environmental awareness, reinforcement of classroom instruction, neighbourhood improvement, more positive attitudes toward school, enhanced interpersonal relationships and heightened sense of responsibility. Should school gardens be a required part of every curriculum? What are the implications of school gardens encouraging neighbourhood involvement? What options exist for more northerly schools? Do school gardens have any role to play in sustainable food systems?

Chapter 3: Learning and Food in Student Initiatives

What kind of student initiatives can schools support that will catalyze learning and change? Student-run restaurants, student-led food co-operatives, student-organized farmers' markets and student-managed market gardens are just some of the examples of such initiatives that schools – from the primary level to colleges and universities – have encouraged, supported and financed. Can these initiatives act as role models for new relationships among people and between people and nature? What benefits accrue to students who are engaged in such experiential learning? In what ways could these initiatives contribute to sustainable food systems?

SECTION II: LEARNING AND FOOD IN THE HOME AND COMMUNITY

While many people associate learning with classrooms, a great deal of learning occurs beyond the walls of educational institutions. Both the homespace and the larger community offer endless opportunities for pedagogical encounters, including informal learning, incidental learning, experiential learning and embodied learning.

Chapter 4: Learning and Food in Unpaid Foodwork

Unpaid foodwork in the home and the community is a vital but often unrecognized service, whether it involves producing, procuring, preparing, serving or cleaning up food. While some view it as a form of oppression, others argue that it represents “a potential source of power, resistance, and creativity” (Brady et al. 2012, 123). What do people learn by participating in unpaid foodwork, and what do the recipients of this service learn? Why are so many of the people who perform unpaid foodwork women? What are the implications of the emerging turn to home cooking? As part of the gift economy, how does unpaid foodwork fit into sustainable food systems?

Chapter 5: Learning and Food in Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture involves producing food within and close to cities around the world. Long a staple of developing countries, it is returning to developed ones as food activists plant guerrilla gardens, lobby for changes in restrictive municipal laws and set up urban farms. The return of food production to urban centres initiates novel situations for both learning about food and learning through food. What are the learning opportunities for children, immigrants, seniors and teens? Can urban agriculture address food insecurity, leisure needs, neighbourhood decay and environmental alienation? Can it play a productive role in sustainable food systems?

Chapter 6: Learning and Food in Commercial Venues

Sites where food is bought and sold provide a range of opportunities for pedagogical engagement. Outlets such as farmers' markets, co-ops, supermarkets and restaurants offer not only food, but also a chance to learn. What can the unmediated spaces in farmers' markets teach consumers about food? How are food co-ops different from other places where food is sold? What role do supermarkets play in the obesity epidemic? Why should restaurants join the local food movement? How can commercial venues become part of sustainable food systems?

SECTION III: LEARNING AND FOOD IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social movements can be understood as groups of people with common interests and purposes who work together and engage in collective action in efforts to effect social change (Koç et al 2012). As challenges to the status quo, they represent sites of struggle where people decide their pedagogical needs, while learning from each other as well as other educational resources. Recently, a number of social movements have emerged that are associated with food, opening up a new range of possibilities for what has been termed “social movement learning” (Hall and Clover 2005).

Chapter 7: Learning and Food in the Local Food Movement

The local food movement arose because of the growing distance between producers and consumers, which characterizes the global corporate food system. While promoting local food production and self-sufficiency, it also encompasses importing what can't be grown locally, as long as it has been produced in a sustainable and just manner. What do producers learn when they participate in a local economy? What do consumers learn when they start to buy local? How can educational institutions support the local food movement? What kind of procurement strategies can build the local food movement? What relationship does the local food movement have with sustainable food systems?

Chapter 8: Learning and Food in the Slow Food Movement

The slow food movement stands up against the unrelenting spread of fast food by sitting down and eating. It combines leisure, politics and the pursuit of dining pleasure by protecting and promoting (and eating) endangered, heritage foods (Mair et al 2008). Through its ‘eco-gastronomy,’ it participates in what it refers to as “virtuous globalization” (Petrini 2004, 52) – a form of globalization that eschews standardization and homogenization for locality and unity in diversity. What do both members and non-members learn through the slow food movement? What can going slow offer that our fast world cannot? Is the slow food movement simply an elitist phenomenon or can it contribute to sustainable food systems?

Chapter 9: Learning and Food in the Food Sovereignty Movement

Food sovereignty involves the right of peoples and nations to control their own food and agricultural systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures and environments (Desmarais 2012). As a radical alternative to the corporate-led, neoliberal industrial model of agriculture, food sovereignty “places those who produce and consume food at the centre of decision making for agriculture and food policies” (p. 363). The food sovereignty movement is the largest social movement in the world, offering unlimited opportunities to learn about the shortcomings of the global corporate food system and the possible solutions that can “feed the world and cool the planet” (p. 372). What can an increasingly urban world learn from a predominantly rural social movement? Can food be considered a human right? Why is food sovereignty considered a prerequisite for food security? Is the food sovereignty movement actually creating sustainable food systems?

SECTION IV: THE FUTURE OF LEARNING AND FOOD

Since food is not only an object of learning but also a vehicle for learning, what is the future of learning and food? One promising option lies in the direction of food literacy – learning to ‘read the world’ by eating (Sumner 2013a). Another can be found in the development of education and food policies. A final option focuses on strategies to help us to learn our way out of our current unsustainable food system and learn our way in to more sustainable alternatives.

Chapter 10: Promoting Food Literacy

A new term derived from literacy studies, food literacy is fluid and contested. While some associate it with individual grocery shopping and food preparation, others look to food literacy as a means to engage with larger issues of global import. As stakeholders manoeuvre to control its meaning (and thus its implications), will this dynamic concept provide a blinkered vision of the future of learning and food or will it become a catalyst for transformative change? Does it promote a deficit model of humanity or a model of human ingenuity and innovation? How can food literacy contribute to sustainable food systems?

Chapter 11: Developing Education and Food Policies

Policy can be understood in its most general sense as the set of rules, spoken or unspoken, that determines how things are run (MacRae 2012). Food policy, in turn, involves “the guiding principles and sets of rules that direct the actions of private [and public] actors involved in various aspects of food provisioning” (Koc et al 2012, p. 384). What sorts of policies can promote learning about food and learning through food – within schools as well as in the larger community? How can food policy councils promote learning? What role can education and food policies play in the search for sustainable food systems?

Chapter 12: Learning to Build Sustainable Food Systems

Sustainable food systems are those that provide everyone with nourishing food within the ecological limits of the planet. In essence, they champion food security, farm security and environmental security, ensuring that feeding everyone does not involve the exploitation of people or nature. As alternatives to the imperative of downloading costs onto society and the environment associated with the global corporate food system, sustainable food systems offer a vision to inspire, a model to emulate and a goal to aim for. How can we learn our way out of our current unsustainable food system and learn our way in to more sustainable alternatives?

References

Belasco, Warren. 2007. *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took On the Food Industry*. 2nd Edition. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Brady, Jennifer, Jacqui Gingras and Elaine Power. 2012. “Still Hungry: A Feminist Perspective on Food, Foodwork, the Body, and Food Studies.” In Mustafa Koç, Jennifer Sumner and

Anthony Winson (eds.), *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, pp. 122-135.

Desmarais, Annette Aurélie. 2012. "Building Food Sovereignty: A Radical Framework for Alternative Food Systems." In Mustafa Koç, Jennifer Sumner and Anthony Winson (eds.), *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, pp. 359-377.

Flowers, Rick and Elaine Swan (eds.). 2012. Special issue on Food Pedagogies. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, Vol. 52, No. 3.

Friedmann, Harriet. 1993. "After Midas's Feast: Alternative Food Regimes for the Future." In Patricia Allen (ed.), *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., pp. 213-233.

Hall, Budd and Darlene Clover. 2005. "Social Movement Learning." In English, L. M. (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 584-589.

Koc, Mustafa, Jennifer Sumner and Tony Winson (eds.). 2012. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

MacRae, Rod. 2012. "Food Policy for the Twenty-First Century." In Mustafa Koç, Jennifer Sumner and Anthony Winson (eds.), *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, pp. 310-323.

Mair, Heather, Jennifer Sumner and Leahora Rotteau. 2008. "The Politics of Eating: Food Practices as Critically Reflective Leisure." *Leisure/Loisir*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 379-405.

Millstone, Erik and Tim Lang. 2003. *The Penguin Atlas of Food*. New York: Penguin Books.

Petrini, Carlo. 2004. Interview: Carlo Petrini. *The Ecologist*, Vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 50-53.

Pollan, Michael. 2008. *In Defense of Food: A Eater's Manifesto*. New York: The Penguin Press.

Sumner, Jennifer. 2014 (forthcoming). "Learning to Eat with Attitude: Critical Food Pedagogies." In Elaine Swan and Rick Flowers (eds.), *Food Pedagogies*. London: Ashgate.

Sumner, Jennifer. 2013a. "Food Literacy and Adult Education: Learning to Read the World by Eating." *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 79-92.

Sumner, Jennifer. 2013b. "Eating As If It Really Mattered: Teaching *The Pedagogy of Food* in the Age of Globalization." *Brock Education Journal – Special Issue: The Impact of Globalization for Adult Education and Higher Education*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 41-55.

Sumner, Jennifer. 2011. "Serving Social Justice: The Role of the Commons in Sustainable Food Systems." *Studies in Social Justice*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp. 63-75.

Sumner, Jennifer. 2008. "Eating as a Pedagogical Act: Food as a Catalyst for Adult Education for Sustainability." *Kursiv - Journal fuer politische Bildung*, Vol. 4, pp. 32-37.

Sumner, Jennifer. 2007. *Sustainability and the Civil Commons: Rural Communities in the Age of Globalization*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Swan, Elaine and Rick Flowers (eds.). 2014 (forthcoming). *Food Pedagogies*. London: Ashgate.

Walter, Pierre. 2013. "Theorising Community Gardens as Pedagogical Sites in the Food Movement." *Environmental Education Research*, Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 521-539.

Welsh, Jennifer and Rod MacRae. 1998. "Food Citizenship and Community Food Security: Lessons from Toronto, Canada." *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. XIX, pp. 237-255.