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DOES LUNCH MATTER?

Abstract

This article examines some of the current food practices at American elementary schools as symptomatic of a larger eating disorder, associated with the increasing commodification of food. Very little has been done to address the relationship of students with food. Americans suffer chronic confusion over how and what to eat; we are constantly being bombarded with newly packaged food commodities and diets. We almost forget *why* we east. What better place to start to address the "high costs" of our eating habits and what we can do to subvert them than our elementary schools.

Keywords

Fast food; McDonald's; health crisis; schools; food industry

THE UNITED STATES currently faces a health crisis. The percentage of obese children in America today has more than doubled since 1970. More than thirty-five percent of our nation's children are overweight, twenty-five percent are obese, and fourteen percent have type II diabetes, a condition previously seen only in adults (Cooper and Holmes xiv). For these reasons, I intend to analyze food as a text in the elementary public school. The degree to which public schools in the United States differ varies a great deal. I have attempted to avoid these disparities by focusing not on actual nutritional content of meals served, or even the environment in which they are consumed, but on food practices at elementary schools as reflection of a larger American eating disorder. Children today need to learn about food; furthermore, food is educational. Claude Levi Strauss once said that food must be "not only good to

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eat, but also good to think." By addressing relationship of students with food, which appears to be lacking in the United States, we have the potential not only to improve their eating habits and overall health, but also to strengthen the overall educational experience.

In "Eating American," Sydney Mintz describes that he does not believe that an American cuisine either preexisted, or has ever arisen from, regional American cooking. When American families sit down for meals, it makes little difference where they live or who their ancestors were (Mintz 33). There is an absence of a collective body of culinary wisdom passed on from the generations before us. I would like to argue that this void can be filled in public schools.

Any definition of a cuisine as national is problematic, as the concept of 'nation' is itself projected over preexisting regional cultural practices and values. Furthermore, a product or practice does not acquire such a label until it appears in a location other than that of its origin. For example, the bagel highlights ways that the production, exchange, marketing, and consumption of food have generated new identities—for foods and eaters alike. As one scholar puts it:

> Looking at bagels in this light, we see that they became firmly identified as "Jewish" only when Jewish bakers began selling them to their multiethnic urban neighbors. When bagels emerged from ghetto stores as a Jewish novelty, bagels with cream cheese quickly became a staple of the cuisine known as "New York deli," and was marketed and mass produced throughout the country under this new regional identity. When international trade brought bagels to Israel, they acquired a third identity as "American." And finally, coming full circle, so to speak, the bagel's Americanization sent purists off in search of bagels that seemed more authentically "New York Jewish" (Gabaccia 38).

The bagel was not Jewish until non-Jews ate it; was not considered New York deli food until marketed as such; and when it showed up in Israel, it was American.

Can I Get Fries with That?

I would consider America's largest food related export to be McDonald's. In 1954, Ray Kroc mortgaged his house and invested his life savings to become the sole distributor of a five-spindled milk

shake maker. When he heard that a hamburger stand called McDonald's in San Bernardino, California was running eight of his Multimixers at once, he packed up his car and headed West to convince Dick and Mac McDonald to open up several more restaurants, which in turn would require more Multimixers. Kroc opened the Des Plaines McDonald's restaurant in 1955. Ronald McDonald made his TV debut in 1963. Micky D's went public in 1965, with the company's first offering on the stock exchange. The Big Mac was introduced in 1968; the Egg McMuffin was introduced in 1973; and the Happy Meal in 1979 ("The McDonald's"). From these humble beginnings, McDonald's now operates over twenty-five thousand restaurants, the majority of which are outside the United States (Watson 349). When McDonald's opened in Kuwait City, Kuwait, in 1994, fifteen thousand people lined up to dine; the drive thru line was seven miles long ("The McDonald's")! The widespread appeal is largely due to aggressive marketing campaigns and heroic efforts to ensure that McDonald's food looks, feels, and tastes the same everywhere. But, what becomes clear is that wherever McDonald's takes root, the core product is not really the food, but the experience of eating in a cheerful, air-conditioned, child-friendly restaurant that offers the revolutionary innovation of clean toilets (Watson 348). "McDonald's is more than a purveyor of food; it is a saturated symbol for everything that environmentalists, protectionists, and anti-capitalist activists find objectionable about American culture…Like the Stars and Stripes, the Big Mac stands for America" (Watson 352).

Though fast food, indeed, is not gourmet, it is most certainly a cuisine and a reflection of a body of industrialized food practices. The demands of daily life make fast food all the more appetizing as it is quick and will satisfy children and adults alike. But it is precisely these factors that are the most sinister. The efficiency of the fast food establishment requires that foods be processed to such a degree that they lose whatever nutritional value they may have had to begin with. The consistency and flavor are reduced to a science that precludes a rich and healthy diet.

I cannot implicate students, parents, food service workers, educators, principals, or any individual party in this critique, but would rather like to interrogate the larger context of this culture of industrial food. As a nation, we suffer chronic confusion over how and what to eat, as we are bombarded with new products and diets. Seduced to food by packaging and promises, we forget *why* we eat.

What better location to start to address a concern threatening the health and well-being of the next generation of Americans than the public elementary school.

Cafeteria Confusion

In general, the food we serve to kids in schools is not unsatisfactory in its careful preparation by faithful food service workers, but in its lack of accountable production, because of what Alice Waters refers to as "hollow fast food values" (Waters). For this same reason, simply changing the food will not address the larger concern of the status of our current American diet.

An abrupt and drastic transformation can perhaps exacerbate the problem, as is evidenced by the case of the UK. Five months after the celebrity chef Jamie Oliver succeeded in cajoling, threatening, and shaming the British government into banning junk food from its school cafeterias, many schools learned that "you can lead a child to a healthy lunch, but you can't make him eat" it (Lyall). The government's regulations, which took effect in September 2006, banished the cheap, instantly gratifying meals that children love by default: hamburgers, French fries, breaded deep-fried processed meat, and sugary drinks. Schools now have to provide at least two portions of fresh fruit and vegetables a day for each child, serve fish at least once a week, remove salt from lunchroom tables, limit fried foods to two servings a week and cut out candy, soda, and potato chips altogether (Lyall). Two mothers, alarmed because their children were going hungry, began selling contraband hamburgers, fries, and sandwiches to as many as fifty students a day, passing food through the school gates (Lyall). The dramatic removal of an established practice of eating 'junk food' at lunch could only *encourage* resistance. Said 'junk food' would only become *more* appealing *outside* of the school—where eventually the students must feed themselves. As Lyall observes, "There is no nicotine patch equivalent for chicken nuggets."

With over seventeen thousand new food products introduced every year (Pollan), we get the majority of our education about food from the food industry, nutritional science, and journalism whose motivations include profitability, mass appeal, and novelty. Michael Pollan writes:

> Before the modern food era—and before nutritionism—people relied for guidance about what to eat on their national

> or ethnic or regional cultures. We think of culture as a set of beliefs and practices to help mediate out relationship to other people, but of course culture (at least before the rise of science) has also played a critical role in helping mediate people's relationship to nature. Eating being a big part of that relationship, cultures have had a great deal to say about what and how and why and when and how much we should eat. Of course when it comes to food, culture is just a fancy word for Mom, the figure who typically passes on the food ways of the group—food ways that, although they were never "designed" to optimize health (we have many reasons to eat the way we do), we would have not endured if they did not keep eaters alive and well.

The culture that determines how and what we eat has largely been influenced by fast food values that privilege convenience and consistency. What's more, the nutritional knowledge that informs our food choices is fallible. National nutritional guidelines are influenced by powerful lobbies. In "Unhappy Meals," Pollan notes that, in 1977, responding to an alarming increase in chronic diseases linked to diet (including heart disease, cancer, and diabetes), a Senate Select Committee on Nutrition, headed by George McGovern, held hearings and produced "what by all rights should have been an uncontroversial document called 'Dietary Goals for the United States.'" The committee had found that while rates of coronary heart disease had soared in the US since World War II, cultures consuming traditional diets based largely on plants had strikingly low rates. Epidemiologists had also observed that during the war years, when meat and dairy products were strictly rationed, the rate of heart disease temporarily dropped. The committee had drafted a straightforward set of dietary guidelines that called on Americans to cut down on red meat and dairy products. Within weeks, pressure from the red meat and dairy industries forced McGovern (who had a number of cattle ranchers among his South Dakota constituents) to rewrite the recommendations to replace "reduce consumption of meat" with "choose meats, poultry, and fish that will reduce saturated-fat intake." An artful compromise, yes, but, Pollan says, this subtle change in emphasis marks a shift from eating foods to eating nutrients. The new language blurs the distinctions between such entities as different as fish, beef, and chicken, lumped together as delivery systems for a single nutrient. The foods, themselves, were

exonerated; and the culprit became an obscure, invisible, tasteless, and politically neutral substance (saturated fat) that may or may not lurk in them.

The isolation of individual nutrients from their foods of origin, though profitable for the processed foods industry as they can reformulate products with new health claims according to dietary fads, is a method of scientific reductionism that can mislead us. People don't just eat nutrients. Whole foods can behave very differently than the nutrients they contain. Researchers hypothesize that antioxidants may be responsible for the protection against cancer conferred by a diet high in fruits and vegetables. The theory is that these antioxidants in fresh produce can vanquish the free radicals in our bodies which can damage DNA and initiate cancers. When these molecules are removed from the context of the whole food they're found in, as in antioxidant supplements, they don't work at all. (In the case of beta carotene ingested as a supplement, scientist discovered it actually increases the risk of certain cancers.) It also promotes a mechanistic view of eating, but people differ in important ways. As Pollan states in "Unhappy Meals:"

> Some populations can metabolize sugars better than others; depending on your evolutionary heritage, you may or may not be able to digest the lactose in milk. The specific ecology of your intestines helps determine how efficiently you digest what you eat…There is nothing very machinelike about the human eater, and so to think of food as simply fuel is wrong.

Food has the potential to relay of a variety of messages to those who consume it. Utilized by food writers and celebrity chefs, the purpose is to show us how to make an occasion special by the devotion of time, energy, and know-how to a meal. Abused by the industry, food becomes a mere meaningless commodity. The intentions of food producers are written, encoded, on food items in the presence, or absence, of processing techniques, additives, and love.

Permanent funding through the Secretary of Agriculture was obtained in 1946 through President Harry S. Truman's signing of the National School Lunch Act (Public Law 396) to assist with the health of the nation's children and to ensure a market for farmers' surplus crops (Cooper and Holmes 35). By 1966, a Special Milk Program and Pilot Breakfast Program had been implemented and the

management of school lunch programs was standardized across the country under one federal agency. The 1980s were a time of strain on the lunch program. The Reagan administration forced budget cuts, causing meal prices to rise and some children to drop out of the program altogether. In an effort to save money and still appear to meet federal guidelines, the government made attempts to add certain foods to the permissible list. Most people were shocked by the allowance of ketchup as a vegetable. By the time President Clinton took office, the USDA was still falling short of meeting its self-established dietary guidelines in the public school system (Cooper and Holmes 37). Ellen Haas was appointed Assistant Secretary of Agriculture in charge of food and consumer affairs, overseeing the National School Lunch Program. Haas and Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy held a series of national hearings and put together the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children in the summer of 1994, which required schools to meet USDA Federal Dietary Guidelines by 1998. The directive that an average of thirty percent or less of the week's calorie count come from fat angered major players in the meat and dairy industries who had been particularly reliant on the school's food program to take their surpluses. Haas' commitment ensured that her School Meals Initiative was the first substantial revision to the National School Lunch Program in nearly fifty years (Cooper and Holmes 38).

Despite the fact that Haas' proposal became federal mandate in 1994, schools continue to struggle to meet its demands. Poultry, soy, and a greater variety of fruits and vegetables have been designated as permissible by the USDA, but fat content is down by only four percent and remains at about thirty-four percent on average.

> And while seventy percent of all elementary schools meet government-mandated nutrient guidelines, only twenty percent of secondary schools have been able to do so. Worse, more snacks are offered at school than ever before and fast-food chains are slowly but surely inching their way into the school system. Cash-poor schools look to school snacks and fast food to help raise money for extracurricular programs, among other things. Some people assert that while in school, children most often choose the foods they get at home. While that may be true, kids are also being bombarded with extremely persuasive advertising for high-fat, low-nutrient foods everyday. Food companies spend

> approximately thirty billion dollars to underwrite about forty thousand commercials annually. It's nearly impossible for the National School Lunch Program to come out ahead if fast foods are among the choices in the lunchroom (Cooper and Holmes 38).

Naomi Klein's *No Logo* documents that fast food chains compete directly with school lunch offerings in thirteen percent of US schools. Subway supplies 767 schools with sandwiches; Pizza Hut is in approximately four-thousand schools; and a staggering twenty-thousand schools participate in Taco Bell's "frozen burrito product line" (Cooper and Holmes 90).

Putting the Lesson in Lunch

Alice Waters is rightly concerned about the state of our nation's lunchrooms. Informed by the principles of the Slow Food movement, the Edible Schoolyard is her model to help address the problems that arise around food within elementary public schools. In 1994, with the conversion of a parking lot to a garden and the implementation of a curriculum that included lunch as a class, this middle school (the Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Berkeley, California) began to see benefits that cannot be quantified by nutritional science.

The Edible Schoolyard addresses the lack of a relationship with food by subscribing to the tenets of slow food. A resistance movement against fast (read, industrialized) food began with Carlo Petrini leading a protest in 1986 against the opening of a new McDonald's in Rome (Kamp 353). Slow Food is now an international association, with local chapters known as convivia, that advocates the preservation of old and endangered foodways, the importance of local and artisanal food products, the sacredness of the family meal as social rite, and the need for public awareness of the ecological, social, and nutritional evils wrought by industrial, monocultural agriculture (Kamp 354). Slow Food promotes food and wine culture, but also defends food and agricultural biodiversity worldwide. It opposes the standardization of taste, defends the need for consumer information, protects cultural identities tied to food and gastronomic traditions, safeguards foods cultivation and processing techniques inherited from tradition, and defends domestic and wild animal and vegetable species.

Alice Waters shifted from countercultural foodie, chef, and restaurateur into a full-time advocate of sustainable agriculture, farm-to-table connectivity, local foods, and early education about 'real' foods (opposed to 'junk' or heavily processed) foods with the birth of her daughter in 1983. Although no one doubts the worthiness of Waters' goals, she has been criticized as lacking the common touch. David Kamp, in *The United States of Arugula: How We Became a Gourmet Nation*, records that Waters can turn people off with such stock lines as: "Give me any kid. In six weeks, they'll be eating chard" (355). "That sounds more like a threat than a promise of uplift, and it's characteristic of her sometimes off-key approach, one that takes a fundamentally noble and celebratory premise and turns it into a guilt trip" (355).

Waters' "Slow Food, Slow Schools: Transforming Education through a School Lunch Curriculum" reads like a manifesto and rallying cry:

> Our system of public education operates in [a] strange, no-context zone of hollow fast-food values...In school cafeterias, students learn how little we care about the way they nourish themselves—we've sold them to the lowest bidder. Soda machines line the hallways. At best we serve them government-subsidized agricultural surplus, at worst we invite fast food restaurants to open on school grounds. Children need only compare the slickness of the nearest mall to the condition of their school and the quality of its library to learn that they are more important as consumers than as students.

But, as Kamp would concede, her ideas are inspired. Presently the Edible Schoolyard consists of a one-acre organic garden and a kitchen-classroom. In the garden, students are involved in all aspects of planting and cultivation; and in the kitchen-classroom, they prepare, serve, and eat food, some of which they have grown themselves. These activities are woven into the curriculum and are part of the school day. A new ecologically designed cafeteria is being built and the program is preparing for the transformation of the school lunch program. When the cafeteria has been built, lunch will be an everyday, hands-on experience and an essential part of the life of the school.

Such a curriculum is not a new idea in education. Waldorf schools and Montessori schools, among others, practice similar experiential, value-oriented approaches to learning based on participation. Waters observes that this kind of participatory learning makes all the difference when it comes to opening minds. "The Edible Schoolyard, for instance, has shown that if you offer children a new dish, there's no better than a fifty-fifty chance they will choose it. But if they've been introduced to the dish ahead of time, and if they have helped prepare it, they will all want to try it" (Waters).

We can all imagine, with Waters, what it would mean for agriculture if every school had a lunch program that served its students only local products that had been sustainably-farmed. However, she does not seem to consider the many and multifaceted obstacles to accomplishing this goal.

> Today, twenty percent of the population of the United States is in school. If all these students were eating lunch together, consuming local, organic food, agriculture would change overnight to meet the demand. Our domestic food culture would change as well, as people again grew up learning how to cook affordable, wholesome, and delicious food (Waters).

Waters' visionary model promotes a rethinking of school lunch, but her project poses financial, spatial, geographical, personnel, and informational challenges to the majority of public schools (on which I will elaborate in the following section.) But, by drawing on the example of the Edible Schoolyard, promoting the establishment of a relationship to the production of food, we can assuredly see tangible results in any community.

Growing Support

Locally, the Dawes Elementary School has implemented an edible schoolyard. Located in Evanston, Illinois, it grew out of prairie garden, butterfly garden, and bird habitat projects initiated by Lynn Hyndman, who has seized the opportunity to use school grounds as an extension of her indoor classroom since she became the director of the school's science lab almost twenty years ago (Scott). Although she has since retired, she continues to oversee the Dawes gardens which she considers to be "three quarters of a job." She ensures financial support for the project through writing grants, doing PR, coordinating the garden committee (that organizes workdays,

teaching days, planting, harvesting, and tasting), sustaining interest amongst new staff and parents, and maintaining the garden itself (Hyndman).

The edible gardens began with six eight by four foot raised beds and, upon the receipt of a grant last year, were completed with the addition of six more beds. The gardens will not further expand, Lynn told me in an interview, because "it's a lot of work" (Hyndman). Dawes School faces many of the same challenges that face any public school attempting to promote a healthier relationship towards food: financial, to pay for tools, seeds, and soil; spatial, to devote land to planting food; geographical, to be able to grow things outside in winter; personnel, to teach students and staff alike to garden; and informational, to utilize the garden in its capacity to enhance the overall learning experience. Although the path may not have been easy, Lynn describes it as an "upward trajectory" (Hyndman). The Dawes community has embraced the garden (fifty to sixty people show up on workdays such as the most recent in April to raise a fence), the principal has taken a leadership role, the PTA supports the effort, and Lynn counts on a "critical mass of teachers" (Hyndman).

The garden has been a rich curriculum resource, as well as a community-building device. Nancy Zordan's fourth graders calculated the number of cubic yards of soil needed to fill the raised beds in the garden; also, students wrote songs about the garden for their music classes. "I love the radish. All I want to do is grow tons and tons of radishes." Moreover, the project is an exercise in collaboration. Ms. Hyndman is negotiating with the City's Parks/Forestry Division to bring in water that now must be hauled from a block away. It's not all bad, she notes, for children to learn that in most of the world, water does not flow from a tap (Scott). A devoted band of teachers tend warm weather crops over the summer. Hyndman has turned to "Keep Evanston Beautiful" for funds, volunteers, and inspiration. The group hosts annual workshops on school gardens and in introducing the concept of garden recycling, or composting. Dawes volunteers plant mustard, collards, chard, and kale over the summer in order to harvest during the fall (when the kids are in school) and stage tastings, which Lynn notes are a critical element to the program. Everyone has to try everything and although they are encouraged to respond to the experience, the kids aren't allowed such negative reactions as "ew!" or "yuck!" In the future, the program aims to impact the quality of the school lunch

program by introducing more fresh food (Scott). The program becomes more elaborate in what Lynn refers to as "slow steps." Next items on the agenda include "helping the children make healthy food choices;" Lynn has recently completed a grant, written with the principal of the school, to furnish a cooking teacher in the winter months to teach two one hour cooking lessons per class (Hyndman).

In its fourth year of operation, Hyndman acknowledges they have yet to acquire any "assessment tools" to evaluate the program, yet there is an abundance of anecdotal evidence to indicate the positive impact of the gardens on the lives of students, teachers, and families (Hyndman). Dawes kindergarten teacher Gail Wilcinski documented trials, tribulations, and victories in a presentation she delivered to the District 65 School Board last year (the text of which is currently available online).

> All of the children at Dawes have the opportunity to plant seeds, watch their plants grow, and harvest them. They help with the preparation of the harvest and get to sit down together to enjoy tasting the delicious, nutritious, organic food they have grown" (Wilcinski).

Although the cafeteria is not necessarily transformed by the gardens, the school day for each of the nearly four hundred children of Dawes is punctuated by the presence of an agricultural responsibility.

Ms. Wilcinski has watched children become mesmerized by the presence of a spider in a home garden. "One child was afraid to pull a carrot out of the ground. Another child offered to help, guided her friend's hand, and they were both wide-eyed and smiling when a beautiful orange carrot appeared" (Wilcinski). The children's engagement with the gardens was undoubtedly a positive one.

> The children walk around the bed of herbs and learn their names. They close their eyes in awe as they smell, feel, and taste freshly picked sage, parsley, and thyme. They wash herbs in a pail of water, and pat them dry. They gather around the table to help prepare tomato, basil, and mozzarella bread. They learn olive oil is healthier than butter. They have fun simply saying the word mozzarella with gusto. MOZZARELLA! Whether it was a warm day or a chilly windy one, when they went to the garden, they never wanted to be anywhere else. They loved tasting the food they'd

> grown, and they loved taking home fresh herbs and a recipe to share with their families (Wilcinski).

The above excerpt from her speech illustrates the array of results from the implementation of a curriculum that encourages a relationship with food: six year olds identifying plants and exploring their senses; learning to prepare rudimentary, yet entirely fresh and delicious, snacks; instructed about their dietary intake in a non-threatening manner; and sharing the experience with their families.

Wilcinski's presentation also illustrates the level of community support required for such a garden endeavor. The good things happening at Dawes require financial support from the school board, in addition to faithful volunteers. At the time, she was requesting support so that "[the garden could] continue to grow…however, that won't happen without a sufficient level of funding" (Wilcinski). Moreover, Lynn Hyndman insists that gardens in schools will not succeed without support from outside of the school. The Dawes garden is a product of grants from Rotary International, Keep Evanston Beautiful, Lowes, Fitzsimons, The Lighthouse, Slow Food USA, Openlands Project, the National Gardening Association, as well as the PTA.

The Dawes gardens are a far cry from Alice Waters' one acre Edible Schoolyard set up, but the results are equally desirable. Schools need not even have gardens to support the creation of a healthier relationship with food. A field trip to a local farm could helpfully supplement the inclusion of food-related education in the classroom, beyond nutritional recommendations provided by a science text book.

Thank You for Helping Me Plant the Radish

Changing school lunches is a monumental task, but small steps taken by one school at a time will generate results that cannot go unnoticed. There are larger issues at stake in many public schools, but I believe that improving lunch is a great start to correcting the inequalities that plague the system. A look at the March 2007 menu for District 65 King Lab School shows the progress that has been made, as well as the distance yet to go. King Lab School is located in the same district as Dawes and reflects an example of what the students are eating at school. It lists daily alternatives including julienne chef salad, yogurt, bagel and cream cheese, and a super submarine, as well as a bread basket featuring whole grains. The fruit tray or a vegetable option is

available every day, but the entrees remain heavily processed. There are five chicken variations: oven fried chicken (twice), chicken nuggets (three times), chicken tenders, popcorn chicken bites, and the chicken patty on bun. Two Fridays feature "Max Stuffed Crust Pizza" and two more feature "Max Stuffed Crust Cheese Dunkers" and "Bosco Cheese Sticks." Nachos Grande was served twice and a cheeseburger, hot dog, taco, waffle, and rotini with meat sauce appeared on the menu ("Evanston/Skokie"). This school district is considered to be ahead of the curve. The federal government has issued a mandate through the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 to establish standards for diet and health with the formation of a Wellness Committee and Wellness Policy that addresses the quality of meals served at school, regularity of physical education, and instruction connected to diet and health (Cooper and Holmes 228). It has been completed a year ahead of time, but Lynn Hyndman still worries that the lunches are inadequate (Hyndman). For elementary school students, the lunches cost two dollars and twenty five cents ("Evanston/Skokie"). The current average reimbursement rate is two dollars and thirty four cents for a "free" school lunch. On average only eighty to ninety cents is spent on the food, the rest being used to cover payroll and overhead. The figure includes the cost of milk and fruit, required by the National School Lunch Program. Milk costs approximately eighteen to twenty cents per lunch. With the remaining fifty to sixty cents, school districts are expected to serve a nutritious, flavorful six hundred to seven hundred calorie lunch (Cooper and Holmes 81). It's no wonder they don't succeed.

Until the infrastructure is in place to transform the way we feed kids in the cafeteria (many schools don't even have functional kitchens), we can strive to foster a healthier relationship to food by teaching kids where it comes from. The use of a garden, or a planter project in recycled containers, or a visit to a local farm or from a local farmer will encourage a healthy attitude towards food and promote awareness of different foods, fresh foods, and whole foods. Lynn Hyndman's favorite part of the edible garden is witnessing that moment when the child realizes, "This is where my food comes from" (page ?). When we take an interest in the production of our food, we can ensure a more meaningful meal.

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