Food as an Arts-Based Research Method in Business and Management Studies

Alia Weston and Zev Farber

Introduction

It has already been firmly established in this book, and beyond (Leavy 2015; Finley 2011, 2008), that arts-based research is about seeing and building knowledge in different ways to enable a holistic, creative, and critical view of the social experience. A key aspect of these perspectives is to bring together the artist and researcher self in a way that is more authentically attuned to the rich subtleties and nuances of everyday life as it is lived. In this chapter, we position food practice, alongside other arts-practices, as a research method that enables an enriched understanding

A. Weston (✉)
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences, OCAD University, Toronto, ON, Canada
e-mail: aweston@faculty.ocadu.ca

Z. Farber
Centre for Emerging Artists & Designers, OCAD University,
Toronto, ON, Canada
e-mail: zfarber@ocadu.ca

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of behaviour in organizations. We do this for two reasons. First, food has been used as an artistic medium that enables the sharing of ideas and an embodied understanding of social experience that is gained through eating of food (O'Loughlin 2016). Furthermore, food is such an integral part of life that, similar to other arts-based approaches, there is a deep congruence with subject matter and method (Leavy 2015). In this chapter we examine how food has been used as a lens to conduct research about working life. Shortt (2018) comments that food is an under-researched context in organization studies. We add that while food-related research methods have been the focus in wider areas of food studies like nutrition, anthropology, cultural studies and historical research (see Miller and Deutsch 2009; Chrzan and Brett 2017), there has been a lack of focus in business and management studies. This chapter addresses this gap by articulating how food can constitute an important part of the research methods available to business, management and humanities scholars.

Leavy (2015) positions arts-based research as informed by three perspectives: art as a mechanism for learning about social life, artistic practices as social research and creative arts therapies. We see a resonance with these trajectories and the previous work completed concerning the scholarly and practice-based engagements with food. First, food is a compelling context for research as it can be used to examine diverse issues related to people's social experiences in the workplace (e.g. Shortt 2018). As such, food practice is a distinct research setting that provides a situated understanding of everyday organizational relationships that are shaped by food (e.g. Counihan and Højlund 2018). In addition, food, like art, has singular capabilities that can actively initiate healing, change and organizational transformation (e.g. Stroebaek 2013). We draw on this framing to support our goal in this chapter, which is to articulate a conceptual perspective that situates food as a methodological tool for research in business and management contexts.

This chapter is structured as follows. In the first section we explore food as a context for research. Here we illustrate that food is a universal language that enables an enhanced understanding of social and organizational life. Equally, it offers a unique lens for examining people's everyday interactions with food in the workplace. In parts two and three we draw on Miller and Deutsch's (2009) distinction between food as a field of study that can be

examined from diverse disciplines with a variety of research methods, and food as a tool that can enhance research methods. In the second section we review a range of qualitative research methods that have been used to document and examine people's food-based experiences in the workplace. We highlight the use of traditional interpretive approaches, ethnographic practices, and process methods. In the third section we examine how food has been used as a tool to accentuate and enrich social interaction and research methods during the research process. The latter is what we refer to when we describe food as an arts-based research method.

In the final section we offer two illustrative examples to demonstrate our approach, both in practical research and as a mode of knowledge dissemination. Our first example centres around *Hang @ Home* and *Good w/ Food*, two artist-talk dinner series which were developed to facilitate experiential learning for students at an art and design university. We outline a participatory action research strategy[1] for examining student's food-based learning about career development and working life. In our second example we give an overview of *[Re]*^{2} *Reconstructing Resilience,* a multidisciplinary research symposium about sustainability, to demonstrate how we used food as a method for disseminating research knowledge about sustainable employment. Our participatory approach would be equally valuable in other business and management research contexts such as marketing and consumer research, socially responsible business and corporate social responsibility, entrepreneurship and innovation, or studies of business and economic futures.

[1]Note that we do not prescribe a philosophy in this chapter. Given the diversity of research methods that can be applied to examine people's engagement with food there are as many philosophies to accompany them. However, Barbour (2004) offers an argument for embodied ways of knowing which are gained through lived experience and movement, which may be useful for understanding embodied experiences with food. Equally if participatory action research is employed (as in our example) MacDonald (2012) highlights a postmodern perspective that encompasses multiple shared realities.

Food as a Context for Organizational Research

Food connects us to one another on a human level since everyone requires regular sustenance and understands the experience of eating (Barber 2014). Yet food functions as more than mere nutritional sustenance. It permeates all aspects of life and culture, from the intimately personal to the professional (e.g. Valentine 2002; Driver 2008; Di Domenico and Phillips 2009; Kniffin et al. 2015; Strangleman 2010; Shortt 2018). This is a reminder that beyond sustenance food enables an augmented bodily understanding of the world (Roe 2006; O'Loughlin 2016). As an integral part of life, it communicates meaning about the social–cultural relationships entwined with food and provides a lens through which to examine these interconnections (Sutton 2010; Bonnekessen 2010; Østergaard Rasmussen 2018; Greene and Cramer 2011; Counihan and Højlund 2018).

An integral property of food is that it enables an understanding of social experience gained through all five senses (Barber 2014; Roe 2006). This embodied experience is amplified by the triggering of emotional responses to food, the sensorial memories of things tasted, felt or smelled in the past, and even future imaginings of the experience (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1999; Ferguson 2011). Beyond the human body, it holds a position of central importance in society since every interaction with food is a form of cultural production (Montanari 2006). For instance, cuisine is a distinct expression of cultural heritage (Brulotte and Di Giovine 2014; Khare 1992), while rituals centred around food—e.g. the eating of birthday cake, or the marriage feast—mark significant rites of passage (Greene and Cramer 2011). Thus, food serves as a system and agent of communication when people express symbolic engagements with food, and as a mechanism for socialization through which people gain understanding of the world around them (Greene and Cramer 2011). It holds further value as an artistic medium which communicates ideas that are eaten and known within the body (O'Loughlin 2016; Eliasson 2016).

The cultural relevance of food is also a central part of working life. For instance, food has had an unprecedented impact on organizational practices during the industrial revolution. British society's consumption

of foodstuffs like biscuits significantly altered contemporary manufacturing and distribution practices (Goody 1982). In today's workplace, the consumption of food and drink are a seamless part of organizational life. Activities such as coffee and tea breaks, taking a homemade lunch to work, eating in the office canteen and going for afterwork dinners and drinks with colleagues illustrate the embeddedness of food in workplace relationships (Shortt 2018). Since food is seamlessly woven through multiple aspects of working life it provides an opportune context for researching ongoing organizational engagements (e.g. Valentine 2002; Driver 2008; Di Domenico and Phillips 2009; Kniffin et al. 2015; Strangleman 2010; Shortt 2018).

Research has documented diverse issues that surround food in the workplace, ranging from worker well-being, to stigmatization and exploitation. For example, the social pressure to conform to particular body types and to adhere to certain consumption patterns in the workplace (Shortt 2018) is a key contributor to worker health and well-being (Bordo 2009). Manalansan (2006) examines the marginalization of diverse workers through the stereotypical association of 'smelly' foods with immigrant workers. Finally, the experience of migrant workers highlights the plight of temporary labourers by demonstrating how the food system is upheld by a precarious, predominantly female workforce (Barndt 2001, 2013). In contrast, research has also highlighted the politicized role that food plays in organizational revitalization. For instance, studies have shown the indelible impact of food justice organizations on community organizing (Click and Ridberg 2010; Levkoe 2013) in ways that emphasize situated relationships that are ecologically and culturally connected to place (DeLind 2006). In Wales the alternative Cittàslow (Slow City) movement was found to develop social cohesion and place-making for local organizations (Pink 2008). While in Glasgow, a focus on artisan food highlighted the creativity of small business owners and their contribution to local productivity (Simpson et al. 2018). Further examples are initiatives like *Fair Trade* which have sought to increase market access for marginalized businesses and food producers (Low and Davenport 2005; Jubas 2015).

The highlighted examples illustrate the significance of food in organizational contexts. For example, the level of health and well-being directly impacts a person's capability to work, while the social pressures of diet and

body image are just as real in the workplace as outside of it. In addition, stereotypical marginalization of foods is harmful to immigrant small business owners. Finally, community building and food movements, have been linked to economic revitalization and the resurgence of local, small businesses. The wide and varied ways that food is woven through everyday life at work demonstrates its value as a context that can deepen understanding of organizational engagement. Having addressed the ways that food has been used as a lens for examining people's engagements in the workplace, in the next section we highlight a range of research methods that have been used to document and provide an understanding of these food-related experiences.

Food as a Setting for Organizational Research

Research has typically explored food as a part of everyday life, often taking a theoretical focus. When applied, methods are used to understand the social relationships surrounding food, both within and outside of organizations. As Miller and Deutsch (2009) have emphasized, food studies can accommodate a diverse range of qualitative and quantitative research methods which are the same as in any other field. Within the food studies discipline they highlight four noteworthy methodological approaches. These are historical methods that explore oral histories and artefacts, ethnographic approaches including observation and narrative methods, material culture approaches that follow the food object, and quantitative methods like surveys and experiments. In business and management contexts research methods are typically qualitative and range from interpretive approaches that examine food-related engagement after it has unfolded, to immersive methods that examine the ongoing performance of events as they occur. In keeping with the arts-based focus of this book, this section highlights a range of qualitative research methods that have been used to document and examine people's food-based experiences in the workplace. We include examples of traditional interpretive approaches, ethnographic practices, and process methods.

Interpretive Methods

Interpretive methods are used to examine the representations and meanings of food. This enables the researcher to gain an understanding of the subjective experiences that organizational members have surrounding food in their working lives. The following are examples of qualitative research methods that go beyond simple case study and interview approaches (i.e. Messeni Petruzzelli and Savino 2015; Lane and Lup 2015). For instance, Driver (2008) employed a reflexive discourse analysis to interpret the social constructions of food and how these shape organizational practices. She collected and analysed narratives from five theoretical perspectives (i.e. empiricism, hermeneutics, critical theory, postmodernism, and psychoanalysis). The aim of this research was to demonstrate that food shapes organizational life through everyday interactions, and there are varied discourses of food in organizations. Participants were instructed to write reflective, emotive stories (c.f. Boje 2001; Gabriel 2000) about their subjective experiences of food at work. Participants were employed at a range of organizations within the fields of health care, retail, financial services, public administration, manufacturing, hospitality, consulting, military, chemicals, automobile racing and telecommunications. Thirty-five individuals self-selected to be part of the study and data was collected over 4 months. Participants submitted their stories and responded to follow-up questions over email. Driver (2008) employed a thematic narrative analysis (c.f. Fineman and Sturdy 1999) to examine recurring patterns in the data.

Driver's work was influenced by Valentine's (2002) earlier research about food, place and identity. Valentine's (2002, 1998) project was conducted over a two-year period in Yorkshire, UK, and employed a case study approach which integrated a range of qualitative and creative methods. Research participants were recruited through a snowballing process after contact with participants recruited through advertisements. Data was collected from 12 households through themed interviews with household participants who worked in a range of industries. Participants were also asked to record the eating practices of their households through video/photographic diaries and drawings. In addition, the research encompassed participant observation in 3 institutions, a prison and 2 schools.

The data was analysed to examine participants' attitudes to various issues surrounding food, including shopping, embodied identity, and eating at home, school and at work.

More recent work is Shortt's (2018) Lefebvrian analysis of food in the workplace, which explores the interconnectedness of food, work, people and space. This in-depth qualitative study was conducted over 18 months with a government agency in the UK. The research examined the post-occupancy experiences of organizational members after they were relocated to a new office space. It included a range of staff across all variety of functions in the organization and employed visual methods to explore their subjective experience of engaging with food in their workplace. Participants captured 6–8 images of their everyday work practices over 3 days, using disposable or their own cameras. The printed photographs formed the basis of photo-elicitation interviews where the researcher discussed the images with each participant to gain meaning about their experiences. The data was examined with an emergent, thematic coding analysis which highlighted themes relating to workplace well-being, spatial practices and food. Shortt's findings highlight the formal and informal eating habits of employees, and the ways that eating and the spatial engagements with food are representations of power and resistance in organizations.

Ethnographic Methods

Although there is a long history of ethnographic work on food, there are limited examples of the technique employed in organizational contexts. The earliest are Rosen's (1985, 1988) ethnographic studies of the working lives of people employed in advertising agencies. Through 10 months of ethnographic immersion (c.f. Van Maanen; 1979) he sought to examine how organizational members engage in and make meaning about their working lives. Rosen collected data by observing participants in daily work activities by sitting in their offices and listening to phone conversations, as well as following them to client meetings, shooting sessions, and lunch. Observations also extended to social activities such as playing Softball, evening beer drinking, weekend fishing, and lunchtime walks. Observational data was collected opening and visibly with a pen and

notepad. Supplementary data included drawings of organizational charts made by participants, public relations materials published by the organization, photographs of organizational documents, materials rummaged from 'trash cans', and any organizational memos sent directly to Rosen. Rosen specifically examined food in the workplace, from his experiences of the ritualized agency Christmas party (1988) and the agency breakfast (1985), viewing both events as forms of social choreography in a broader organizational drama. In addition to immersing himself in the gatherings as an audience member, Rosen (1988) interviewed organizational members before the social gatherings to gain further contextual understanding about the history, meanings, and preparations. At the events, organizational members were observed engaging in familial relationships as they ate food and drank together. Through these relationships Rosen examines the organizational community created through commensality.

Di Domenico and Phillips (2009) similarly performed an ethnographic study to understand ritualistic engagements with food in the workplace. They analysed the formal dining hall rituals at a series of Oxbridge Colleges. They employed opportunistic ethnography (c.f. Reimer 1977) which involves researchers studying contexts in which they are already regularly immersed. The study included 2-hour long participant observations of 22 formal dinners, in 10 Oxbridge colleges, over a period of 24 months. Fieldwork data was collected primarily by the first researcher through reflective diary accounts, and participant observations. Additional data was collected from ethnographic interviews which consisted of conversations and interactions with people. Autoethnographic comments were also recorded to document the researcher's own experiences and interactions. The second researcher added supplementary ethnographic commentaries and reflections through the lens of a 'critical friend' (c.f. Costa and Kallick 1993). The findings emerged through analysis of the data and highlight the importance of rituals in organizational practices.

Pink (2008) used ethnography to examine place-making in Wales. She used an urban tour as a moving case study to understand the social and sensorial dimensions of shared eating and drinking. The tour wove through the town merging through interior and exterior spaces owned by local organizations including cafes. Data was collected alongside, and with, research participants while they enjoyed various types of foods such as tea, coffee

and biscuits. The immersive ethnographic process enabled the researcher and participants to engage in a multi-sensory experience encompassing sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste. Participants recorded their experiences through photography, audio/video-recordings, written text and verbal descriptions. The data was reflexively analysed to gain understanding of the discourses and practices of the Cittàslow (Slow City) movement. In this example, Pink's (2008) research highlights the relevance of embodied, sensory examination of working life. Sensory ethnography has become recognized as a salient research method for examining food related experiences. A further example depicting an organizational context is Østergaard Rasmussen's (2018) ethnography of a professional Danish restaurant. See Counihan and Højlund's (2018) edited volume for this work and an extended collection of anthropological examples that explore the sensory engagement with food.

Process Methods

Process perspectives view organizations as defined by an ongoing process of becoming (see Hernes et al. 2013). Research methods thus examine the becoming of social interactions and illustrate the movement of processes as they are in action (see Hernes 2010). The following are examples of research methods that have been used to examine how people perform and shape their lives while in the process of working with and eating food. Bouty and Gomez (2015, 2013) examined the creative process in haute cuisine restaurants to understand the flow of the activities and events within creative food-work. The authors employed a comparative, qualitative analysis and examined the data from a process perspective (c.f. Langley 1999, 2007). Data was collected from 3 Michelin-starred restaurants in France, and the approach included the collection of multiple sources of evidence from primary and secondary data sources to provide a rich qualitative data-set. Primary data included formal interviews and informal conversations with the head chef. Secondary data included the observation of visual material from video documentaries depicting the creative work of the head chef with key collaborators and their kitchen teams. Additional materials included physical materials such as menus, recipes, drawings,

press articles and collages. The videos were particularly important for the process methodology because they enabled observation of the creative process of the chefs in real time, both inside and outside the kitchen. The researchers utilized the video data as observation material to analyse the people, conversations, gestures and places as they are entwined with food. The data was analysed in two phases. The first phase involved a coding analysis which identified three threads of creative process engagement. In the second phase these threads were further compared across the three restaurants to highlight recurring dynamics of creative behaviour. Simpson et al. (2018) similarly explored creativity of food-workers. This research examined the performativity of food practice by drawing on Urry's (2007) notion of travelling concepts. The research went beyond a representational focus on food and explored the organizing practices that artisan food producers use to playfully and creatively navigate their organizational lives. Data was collected through narrative inquiry which included conversations and photo-elicitation (c.f. Bramming et al. 2012). The research was conducted over a period of 4–6 weeks and participants collected images that reflected meaningful encounters in their everyday work experiences, and then discussed key images with the researchers. The data was examined to understand how participants creatively perform and shape their working lives.

Roe's (2006) specialty are research methodologies which depict the performative material nonhuman. She employed Actor–Network Theory (ANT) (c.f. Murdoch 1997) to examine the embodied practices of consumers by tracing the connections between humans and their food. She advances methods which follow the nonhuman commodity through the agro-food system (c.f. de Sousa and Busch 1998). Roe explains, '[y]ou cannot imagine talking to a carrot, but you can imagine a carrot in a larger network of fields, farms, industrial processing and supermarket-shelving' (109). Data was collected to document how things become food during the processes of making and eating food. Data included video diaries made by organic food consumers, as well as Roe's own observations of a live art sushi-making performance entitled 'Beauty is Perfection', by artist William Speakman who staged a sushi kitchen as an art installation. The live performance underscores the importance of engaging with the nonhuman actant as it is in the process of transformation.

Food as an Arts-Based Research Method in Organizations

The previous section demonstrates that there is a small but growing area of research that examines the use of food in business and management studies. In the examples we demonstrated how traditional qualitative methods have been utilized to capture the social interactions between humans and food in the workplace. In this section we outline examples of what we consider to be arts-based food research methods. These are research approaches that go beyond traditional methods and use food as a tool to accentuate and enrich social interaction and research methods during the research process. We give examples of food being used to actively facilitate community building in research projects, and to disseminate research knowledge.

Food as a Method for Community Building

The following examples highlight how food has been used to actively facilitate social interaction and community building in working life. Stroebaek (2013) employed a qualitative study of caseworkers in a public sector Danish organization dealing with public family law. She examined informal workplace culture during a large-scale merger to understand how communities of coping were developed through communal coffee breaks in response to workplace stress and exhaustion. The study employed interview and focus group methods. The study integrated food in the data collection process, reflecting Hannam's (1997) investigation of the making and drinking of tea, while participants drank tea. In Stroebaek's (2013) study, focus group participants engaged in structured interviews to inform decision-making for the segmentation of the focus groups. Eight small focus groups of 2–3 people were facilitated to ensure active engagement of all participants. The researcher moderated each focus group to create a comfortable atmosphere which encouraged open and friendly dialogue. Refreshments were served to facilitate the feeling of a 'coffee break'. To facilitate discussion the researcher posed questions on a whiteboard and invited responses via post-it notes on a custom-designed poster. The study employed critical discourse analysis (c.f. Fairclough 2005) to examine

the plots and storylines (c.f. Gabriel 2000) in the interviews and visual material. Published findings were depicted through rich descriptions to illustrate the emergent insights about food culture in everyday office life.

Researchers have also used food as a tool to enhance relationships, and thus the quality of data. Abarca (2007), for instance, examined the entrepreneurial efforts of working-class Mexican women to understand how they use home cooking in public food stands as an economic resource to support themselves and their families. She developed an ethnographic approach accentuated by food, which she calls *charlas culinarias* (culinary chats). Abarca collected data about the women's food related experiences by engaging in conversations with them at their food stands as she savoured their food. Situating the interactions over food made the conversations more evocative and culturally sensitive. Similarly, Deutsch (2004) intentionally collected data about food over food-related interactions. He conducted research with men about food and masculinity by carrying out interviews while the men were cooking. This enabled a richer conversation where the participants volunteered insights. Emilson et al. (2014) purposefully used food to develop collaborative practice in their research with a marginalized womens' group. Rather than using typical structured research tools for facilitating collaboration, they focused on building bonds through slow, informal meetings. These meetings revolved around the discussion of everyday activities and the familiar act of drinking tea. Here the social engagement was cemented through the simple interaction with a foodstuff that everyone involved could relate to and which made everyone feel at home. Finally, Artist Olafur Eliasson also used food to build community. Most famous for artworks that emphasize the natural elements, an intriguing part of his practice is the food-work in his Berlin studio. A specially designed kitchen became a gathering place where studio staff shared meals and their lives (O'Loughlin 2016). The all-female kitchen acts as a social leveller and brings an element of compassion (Eliasson 2016).

Food has been intentionally used as an arts-based research method that facilitates active healing and social change in relation to work practices and working life. This is exemplified by Brandt (2013) who used food as an arts-based research method to highlight the plight of agricultural migrant workers in Canada. She incorporated activist art into a critical

educational framework to highlight tensions and contradictions about labour practices. The research incorporated artistic installations evoking the Mexican practice of *ofrendas* (domestic alters) following the work of the Chicana artist Mesa-Bains (c.f. González 2008; Hooks and Mesa-Bains 2006). The installations incorporated foods and objects representing food in the workplace to highlight notions of food justice and provoke dialogue about sustainable production and labour. The objective of the approach was to use food as a tool to creatively engage with the complex politics surrounding labour in the food industry, and in this way mobilize activists to engage in social justice. A further example is the artistic practice of Lisa Myers, is a First Nations artist, curator, musician and chef in Ontario, Canada. Myers considers walking and cooking as research methods in her working life as a practising artist. She intentionally uses food as a research method and intervention tool to comment on power, ideas of value(s), and social relationships (Myers 2018). An example of Myers' work is *Blue Prints* (2012 and 2015) a collection of prints and a stop-motion animation made with anthocyanin pigment from blueberries. The works map the path followed by her grandfather when he ran away from a residential school, depicting the traumatic impact of settler colonization and displacement on her family (Springgay and Truman 2017). In addition, she introduces an interactive component to the exhibition space by curating participatory performances that include the sharing of blueberries and other foods in these social gatherings (Myers 2018).

Food as a Method for Knowledge Dissemination

There is a renewed interest in the creative power of food as a medium that fosters sensory learning and engagement in the world (Flowers and Swan 2015a). As highlighted in the previous section there are examples of food being used to educate and provoke social change in the art contexts. Given the growing importance for research knowledge mobilization and exchange it seems relevant to explore how arts-based methods have been used for knowledge dissemination. The following are examples of methods used to share knowledge in educational and creative contexts.

These include formal educational programs, as well as informal initiatives via the media and in local communities (Flowers and Swan 2015b). In addition, we provide an example of a food-inspired academic research conference to illustrate how these approaches can be applied to business research contexts.

In formal educational institutions, food has been used as a tool for critical literacy and participatory learning experiences (Adelman and Sandiford 2007; Rahm 2002). This involves learners engaging with food in all aspects of the curriculum (Duster and Waters 2006). The appeal of this method is that it facilitates social interaction and enables holistic learning which draws connections across all subjects and aspects of life (Menand 2001). Programs range from ecological interventions involving growing food to community-run gardens that offer training and employment. Bonnekessen (2010) used food to activate critical pedagogy in a formal educational institution. She used food as a lens to critically examine social issues, such as the historical impact of the colonial appropriation of food and the role of food in discrimination. For instance, students learned about geopolitical history through the potato. Bonnekessen highlights that an important outcome of the class was that students learned that food was more than a gourmet item to eat on a plate. Williams-Forson examines what food objects mean to people and what this tells us about society (e.g. Williams-Forson and Counihan 2013). As a scholar of material culture, Williams-Forson examines how food objects 'speak' in society. Her methodology is to put food at the centre of a research study and use a range of theories to examine it. She uses this approach as a form of pedagogy to educate students about the social relationships and behaviour surrounding food objects. In an interview about her scholarship she gives an example of teaching students about the race and culture in the United States through the object of a chicken that sparks conversation about the urban legend of the chicken bone express (see Miller and Deutsch 2009: 191–197). A further example is an ecological approach in a primary school. Through the production and sales of a cookbook students gained applied learning of agriculture, cooking science, letter writing and entrepreneurship(Langhout et al. 2002). This latter example highlights the use of food as an integrated tool for disseminating knowledge about diverse subjects including business knowledge.

An example of informal community initiatives are the critical arts-based food interventions used in the *Food for Thoughts* project. *Food for Thoughts* was a discussion series facilitated by EyeLevel Gallery over the summer of 2016 in Halifax, Canada. The aim of the series was to promote critical discussion about art practice, presentation and social issues. Food was used as an engagement method and brought people together to share their thoughts over a meal. Events included a picnic run in collaboration with *Loaded Ladle*, a student run co-operative at the University of Dalhousie which works to provide students with fresh and affordable food, and a 'potluck' (a meal or a party where guests all guests bring a dish to share) that was shared and consumed during a feminist film screening (EyeLevel Gallery 2016). Hollenbach (2016) narrates her experience of participating in a further iteration of the series, which took the form of a food-based artist-talk by the Toronto artist Amy Wong, situated in the exhibition space showcasing her installation. A select number of guests were invited, through a lottery, to participate potluck style while the artist prepared and served a healing Chinese soup. The work and food practice prompted dialogue about intersectional feminism and decolonization. The format used food as a method to forge intimacy, subverted hierarchies and facilitate social interaction (Hollenbach 2016).

There has been increased popularity for food-related televisions shows and documentaries (Flowers and Swan 2015b) which depict the working practices of food producers and food-workers such as chefs. The examples below highlight the use of media as a method of the representation and dissemination of knowledge about food in the workplace. They equally show the influence that the media has had on live events that share knowledge about food issues through the eating of food. Examples include the activist documentary *Food Inc. Food Inc.* is an activist film produced by film-maker Robert Kenner. It critiques the global capitalist food system by representing knowledge about food-based social movements (Flowers and Swan 2011). *Just Eat It* is a documentary which raises awareness about food waste and food rescue, which revolves around the real-life events of a Vancouver couple who eat only rescued food for 6 months (Peg Leg Films 2014). Similarly, *The Theatre of Life* follows the culinary pursuits of the renowned chef Massimo Bottura, which are aimed at social change. Capitalizing on his status as a celebrity-chef, Massimo provokes awareness of

food poverty and food waste by establishing fine-dining soup kitchens that raise awareness of hunger and food waste. Consequently, he established the *Food for Soul* initiative to instigate active change in communities. This organization has established numerous fine-dining soup kitchens across the globe including London (UK) and Rio de Janeiro (Refettorio Ambrosiano 2016).

Inspired directly by Massimo's advocacy, the *Zero Waste Food* conference was hosted in New York City in 2017. The event hosted panel presentations at the New School alongside cooking demonstrations at the Institute of Culinary Education. This academic intervention enabled a range of stakeholders and contributors from across the food system to engage in dialogue and in applied learning about issues of sustainability, food waste and sustainable business models. Attendees ate food made from ingredients that would ordinarily be discarded. The event fostered an environment that enabled a range of organizations from across the food system to interact and it mobilized knowledge of shared interests (Zero Waste Food 2017). Similarly, *Trashed and Wasted*, an alternative Food Festival in Toronto, saw socially conscious chefs and food suppliers turning rescued food waste into unexpected delicacies. Festival-goers were engaged in embodied learning through experiencing the edible transformation of traditionally discarded foods (Greif 2017). Offerings included beer brewed from stale bread as well as spirits made from leftover milk. A local restaurant also educated the public on the culinary value of the *Pygostyle* (also called the Pope's Nose) by serving up fried chicken-tail pops. Despite critiques about the level of impact that celebrity chefs have on public consumption patterns (Flowers and Swan 2015b) these examples illustrate the value of approaches that creatively and materially employ food as a method for knowledge dissemination. They demonstrate ways that food can be used for learning, which is gained through eating foods imbued with social issues. They equally demonstrate the power that informal media events have to inspire academic knowledge exchange and research dissemination.

Our Food Practice: Using Food as an Arts-Based Method

In the previous sections we highlighted how food has been used as a lens to examine working life. We explored this from three dimensions: food as a context for researching salient issues in the workplace, food-based research studies to which a range of qualitative research methods can be applied to understand working life, and food an arts-based method for research and knowledge dissemination. In this section we offer two illustrative examples to demonstrate how we have used food as an arts-based method to facilitate and accentuate understanding about working life and sustainable employment, both in practical research and as a mode of knowledge dissemination.

Conceptually we position food as a tool for critical learning (Adelman and Sandiford 2007; Bonnekessen 2010; Williams-Forson, cited in Miller and Deutsch 2009) and embodied engagement (Menand 2001; Roe 2006). Our method resonates with the creative approach of Eye-Level Gallery since we use food interventions to forge intimacy, subvert hierarchies and facilitate collaboration (Hollenbach 2016). Our first example centres around two artist-talk dinner series *Hang at Home* and *Good w/ Food*, which were developed to facilitate experiential learning for art and design students. In addition, we outline a participatory action research strategy for examining students' food-based learning about career development and working life. In our second example, we give an overview of the 2016 *[Re]*^{2} *Reconstructing Resilience* symposium to demonstrate how we used food as a method for disseminating research knowledge about sustainable employment. We hope these examples will provide a useful guide to others who are considering using food as an arts-based method in their own research.

Food as an Intervention and Research Method for Career Development

Hang @ Home and *Good w/ Food* are artist-talk dinner series that enable senior OCAD University students to engage in meaningful dialogue with professionals to enhance their early-career development. The beginnings of the *Hang @ Home* dinner series are rooted in collaboration. The Centre for Emerging Artists & Designers (career development unit) was exploring ways to engage students through novel and meaningful career-oriented programming. Looking across OCAD University for strategic advisors, one group stood out as successful community animators—the programming duo of Vanessa Nicholas and Caroline Macfarlane at OCAD U's Student Gallery. Several discussions revealed a gap in opportunities for students to participate in facilitated professional dinner events. As the lifeblood of career-advancement within arts and culture, it quickly became apparent that the chance for students to connect with practitioners over a meal could be of immense value, particularly among the University's Faculty of Art. The collaboration was structured in two basic parts—student outreach and skills development to be conducted by the Centre for Emerging Artists & Designers, and outreach to professional practitioners and event logistics undertaken by the Student Gallery. Resources to support the material costs were sourced through private foundation funding. In the fall of 2014, *Hang @ Home* first brought select OCAD University students together with art and design community leaders over a curated dinner. The images shown depict the dinner made by collaborating artists Basil AlZeri and Mikiki (Figs. 1 and 2).

The second dinner series, *Good w/ Food*, was first held in the summer of 2018 (see Fig. 3). The dinner brought students from across all Faculties to engage with industry professionals over food prepared with a social mission. The series integrated food prepared by social enterprises such as Hawthorne Kitchen, a Toronto-based restaurant that serves 'farm-to-fork city food' prepared by people in need of skills and employment. One outcome of *Good w/ Food* was that students gained experiential learning about socially responsible careers and business practices. Both dinners were intentionally kept small and held in private spaces that served as exhibition venues, studios or homes. They demonstrated the value of hybridizing

Fig. 1 Curating food as art at Hang @ Home Event

Fig. 2 Forming social relationships over food at the Hang @ Home Event

personal life with professional practice. The guest lists, intimate settings and models for creative work gave students an impactful, enlightening and critically novel experience of working life and socially responsible careers. The food itself was also a catalyst for conversation. Being ethically sourced and/or prepared by a social enterprise meant that the meal

Fig. 3 Communal salad making station and food table at *Good w/ Food* Event (June 2018)

sparked dialogue about principled practice, community and sustainable consumption. These thoughtfully curated meals were essential in facilitating meaningful relationships and in elevating the experience beyond 'networking' or 'professional development'. Ultimately, both dinner series were about making networking less intimidating and encouraging students to consider social activity, relationships and fun as integral to a thriving career in the arts community.

What follows is a 'recipe' for success for others who wish to adopt this approach (Fig. 4).

The preceding examples can be employed as food interventions that catalyse critical learning. In these formats the experience is the crucial element and it does not necessitate documentation. However, if data collection is required, we offer the following as a research approach that can be used to examine participant's engagement in food-based learning about career development and working life.

We suggest a research strategy like participatory action research (McIntyre 2007) which enables researchers to co-develop and co-implement research with participants. This approach incorporates methods of data collection that enable an active examination of theoretical concepts and simultaneously gives participants the opportunity to build real-world

Hang at Home

Accommodates 10-15 people with a 1:1 ration of students to professionals

1-2 Hosts

2 Special guests

6 Students

2 Institutional representatives

1 Vegan meal prepared by a social enterprise

Adult beverages to taste

Select hosts who model creative and mindful professionalism and who live or practice in distinctive spaces that will comfort and inspire. Special guests ought to complement the host selection, and may, in fact, be invited by the hosts themselves if a level of social familiarity is desired. Compose a group of inspiring people that have a balance of experience and influence to offer the keen student attendees.

Make sure you have two representatives on hand who are able to relieve hosts and guests alike of kitchen duties. At the venue, set the desired tone with low-level lighting and music. The meal served should be responsibly sourced in order to nurture the corresponding ethics of community and ecology that underlie Hang @ Home. Offer beverages and season guests with chips and chocolate as needed.

If recording, filming or photographing the event, ensure consent has been sought and gained. Follow your university ethics guidelines regarding consent and storage of data.

Outcomes will vary.

Fig. 4 A recipe for a collaborative food event

knowledge and skills. In addition, we recommend research methods that include a combination of documentation and interventional approaches, such as critical learning through food practice (Hollenbach 2016), focused ethnography (Knoblauch 2005) coupled with sensory ethnography (Pink

2008), and photo-elicitation techniques (Bramming et al. 2012). We propose the research is carried out in three parts consisting of (1) an orientation workshop, (2) a curated food intervention and (3) a debriefing conversation.

Part 1: An orientation workshop: This will socialize participants to the research, and orient them to the curated food intervention (Part 2). This workshop should explain what the research intends to achieve and the benefits to participants. An interactive activity can be used to gauge the level of understanding of participants, regarding topics (e.g. precarious work; social capital; experiential learning and career framing; and critical food practice) and provide them with a base level of knowledge. The meeting should also orient the group to the food intervention and provide the opportunity for participants to co-develop and shape the intervention to their learning needs. Importantly, this workshop should be where you seek and gain consent in accordance with your university ethics guidelines. Particular attention should be paid to images or videos that you, or your participants, intend to capture as part of the research, and suitable guidance and information should be shared with the group.

Part 2: A curated food intervention: Like *Hang @ Home* and *Good w/ Food*, this will facilitate experiential learning. As highlighted, the interventions offer actual environments that enable students to engage in experiential career development. The interventions can be themed with a guiding topic that is embedded in the food and serves the dual purpose of focussing the learning experience and socializing participant interaction. The intentionally curated meals are essential in facilitating meaningful relationships (Hollenbach 2016). Focused ethnography (Knoblauch 2005) can be used to facilitate immersive deep-dive data collection through a range of formats like observations, pictures and video material. Since food is a key aspect of the intervention, sensory data can be captured (Pink 2008).

Part 3: A debriefing conversation: Participants should be invited to engage in debriefing conversations after each learning intervention to share their personal learning experiences. We suggest photo-elicitation (Bramming et al. 2012; Simpson et al. 2018; Shortt 2018) as a method for engaging in follow-up conversations. Participants should be given

the opportunity to discuss their experiences and learning from the event through the meaningful moments they have captured in, for example, their photographs.

Food as a Method for Knowledge Dissemination

In this example we illustrate how food can be used as an embodied method for disseminating research knowledge. The 2016 *[Re]*^{2} *Reconstructing Resilience* symposium, funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Connections Grant, was designed to exchange research knowledge about critical issues on sustainability in contemporary society, such as sustainable employment. The event was hosted at OCAD University in the form of a conference and art exhibition (Clough and Weston 2016; Weston and Clough 2016). The event began with the premise that resilience refers to a community's ability to creatively adjust and sustain itself given the rapid and sometimes negative changes in society. It proposed that effective sustainability initiatives should integrate interdisciplinary dimensions including economics, ecology, politics and culture. The event showcased thought-provoking interdisciplinary research projects and art installations from a diverse range of subjects including climate change and bioremediation, community empowerment and social justice, and sustainable art and design practice.

The curatorial perspective of the event emphasized the value of integrating food as a lens to promote critical engagement with multidisciplinary, critical issues and challenged participants to question the ways that people engage in social change. Since sustainability is a complex topic, the event was intentionally infused with art, design and food practice to make ideas more tangible and accessible to participants. The event showcased examples of sustainable organizations and working life through a diverse range of formats, including research presentations, art/design installations, participatory interactions and food experiences. For instance, participants sat among artwork as they listened to research presentations. One art installation highlighted the environmental challenges of industrial communities (Kornet 2018) while we listened to a presentation about economically

sustainable models that provide marginalized communities access to clean water (Tranum 2016). In addition, participants participated in creating an interactive art installation that highlighted the tensions between waste and resilience. The interactive format was crucial in facilitating community building and applied learning among participants about these issues.

A core part of the event was engagement with food that was subtly woven throughout the day. Food consumed by attendees was carefully chosen to reflect resilience and sustainability in organizations and working life in order to deepen participants' understanding of the overarching theme. This was achieved by sourcing refreshments from local community businesses like Loft Kitchen and the Cider Keg. The Cider Keg is a family business that creates award-winning produce in Vittoria, Ontario. They take care of the whole process of food production including growing the apples that end up in their beverages and condiments. The event was catered by Loft Kitchen, a social enterprise that exemplifies socio-economic sustainability. Like Hawthorne Kitchen, Loft Kitchen supports people with socio-economic barriers to gainful employment by training them in hospitality services. The proceeds from their catering services are fed back into the organization. Participants gained an embodied understanding of sustainability and resilience through consuming locally produced, sustainable food and drink, as well as through interacting with members of Loft Kitchen who also participated in the event.

An additional way that the event reinforced the theme of sustainability was through the co-design of recycled 'seed paper' name tags with the OCAD University student group grOCAD. This was a creative opportunity to enable students to engage in the planning of the event, as well as to produce artworks that then embodied the concept of the event. Participants were given the seed paper name tags at the conference. These artworks connected participants by enabling them to share their information, as well as engage in dialogue about sustainability, art and the origins of food. Participants were invited to take the seed paper home to grow their own plants. These interactions were intentionally curated so that participants would bring the theme of resilience and sustainability back home into their lives and provide them with a long-lasting connection with the conference (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 Seed paper name tags, food selection, and art exhibited at the *[Re]^2 Reconstructing Resilience* Conference (January 2016)

The following are ingredients for success:

1. Conceptual Framing: Consider, from the start, your framing concepts and how they could relate to food. Go beyond simply adding food to an event as an afterthought. How can you serve food that embodies the theme you are working with?
2. Embodiment at the Event: Consider what it would it take to eat this concept and experience it with your body? How can eating and interacting with the food give people a deeper understanding of your topic?
3. Place and People: Consider where the event is held and who is participating. How can you intentionally choose a space or setting that connects to the framing concept or food choices? Who is on the guest list, how can you facilitate connection between the guests?
4. Take Aways: Consider how food can be used to create a lasting impression. What can participants take away that will leave them with a lasting impression of the topics and ideas covered?
5. Social Impact: Consider what local businesses you can support. Are there any community businesses or social enterprises that support social causes which resonate with our conference?

6. Costs and Resources: Consider how much will this cost to integrate. Can you get funding to support the work from a research grant or partnering with an organization (e.g. SSHRC Connections Grant or ESRC Knowledge Transfer Partnerships or Seminar Series)?

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have positioned food as an arts-based research method that can be used to accentuate and enrich social interaction in research about working life. Although a prominent topic in nutrition studies and anthropology, food is under-researched management studies. This is surprising given the embeddedness of food in working life. We are clearly missing out on the depth of knowledge this medium can offer us about organizational practices. We addressed this gap by examining how food intersects with organizational practices from three perspectives: food as a research context for examining organizational issues, food as a setting to which diverse research methods can be applied, and food as an arts-based research method wherein food, as a physical substance, is used as a tool to accentuate and enrich social interaction and research methods during the research process.

As a context for research in the workplace, food offers a unique lens for gaining a situated understanding of issues in the workplace. The highlighted examples illustrate the significance of food in organizational contexts. For instance, a person's level of health and well-being directly impacts their ability to work, while the social pressures of diet and body image are just as real in the workplace as outside. We also highlighted the challenges of immigrant small business owners and migrant workers to demonstrate how research can highlight inequalities in the workplace. As a contrast, we also highlighted the links between economic revitalization and politicized food movements to demonstrate how research about food can indicate business growth. The wide and varied ways that food is woven through everyday life at work demonstrates its value as a context that can deepen understanding of organizational engagement. As a setting for research, food-based engagement offers an untapped opportunity for documenting

people's experiences in the workplace. In our review of methods used in food research we found three approaches that are typically used to enable understanding of distinct aspects of organizational engagement. Interpretive approaches offer the subjective experience of organizational members, while ethnographic practices offer an immersive understanding of working life as it occurs around food, and process methods enable researchers to capture the ongoing movement food-workers as they engage in work practices. In the third section we went on to define what constitutes food as an arts-based research method by explaining food has been used as a tool to accentuate and enrich social interaction and research methods during the research process. Here we examined how food is intentionally used to build community and facilitate research in organizational contexts, both as a method of data collection and as a method for research dissemination.

Given that this is a book about arts-based methods, we see the latter as our most distinctive contribution because we go beyond representational methods and demonstrate how food has been used in the research process. We highlighted examples of research that uses the cultural and emotive qualities of food to shape engagement in the research process as it happens in working life and to illustrate the opportunities available to researchers. In addition, given the increasing need for innovative forms of research exchange, we also emphasized the use of food in research dissemination. Finally, to further emphasize the value of this approach we offered two illustrative examples to demonstrate how we have used food to shed light on working life and sustainable employment, both in empirical research and in knowledge dissemination. Our first example provides a practical format for food-based learning interventions—in the form of an artist-talk dinner series—that can support students in their career development, and we supplement this with an overlaying participatory action research strategy. In our final example we illustrated how we used food as a method for disseminating research knowledge about sustainable employment. In discussing both of these approaches we have mapped out some guidance for other researchers so that they might successfully engage with food as an arts-based method in their research practice, and, we hope, add to broader developments in qualitative research in the business and management field.

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