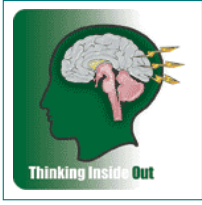


Thinking Inside-Out!



We Are What (and How) We Eat

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Everyone knows eating fish is good for you. With [Fishing: Get in the Habitat! Lesson 6:5 – Eating Fish](#) [PDF](#), students learn that as part of a balanced and healthy diet, fish provide important nutrients, such as Omega-3 fatty acids and protein that prevent disease, promote development of and support healthy nervous systems, and keep people strong. Even so, it's no secret that most kids will probably prefer to eat fast food burgers, pizza, sodas, and anything endorsed in a commercial by the latest media icon. So, *how* do you get kids to eat fish?!

Food is More Than Nutrients

Introducing kids to healthy eating through the activity of fishing is an idea you might like to try with your students. *How* might that work?

First of all, kids don't eat nutrients, kids eat food. I don't know many kids who would answer the question "*What* do you want for dinner?" with "I'm hungry for some Omega-3 fatty acids and protein!"

Food is holistic – not a sum of it's nutrients - it's something far greater than the sum of its parts... food includes taste, tradition, enjoyment, contentment, security, an expression of the cook's passion and love, family time, celebration, ceremony, culture, relationships – it's also *how* we eat. Healthy food *and healthy eating* nourishes the body, mind, *and the soul* – and our relationships to ourselves, our families and our community.

Engage Students in the “Whole Story” of their Food

Teach kids about healthy eating by involving them in the whole story of their food – not just what it is, but where it comes from, how it gets to be our food and what it “means”.

One way to do this is to have your students plant a garden on the school grounds, tend the plants as they grow, harvest the produce, plan a celebratory meal and cook, share and eat the fruit of their labor with members of the school community and their families, and reflect on where the meal came from and their connection to it – and how this process makes them *feel* about their food. Many teachers are doing this with their students. But a garden grows over the summer months, when most kids are “vacating” school.

But, you can take kids fishing in the Fall, Winter and/or Spring as it fits into the rest of your curriculum during the school year. Teach your students *how* to fish using the lessons and activities from the Fishing: Get in the Habitat! Leaders Guide and then take them fishing. But don't stop there. Take the activity of fishing to its natural conclusion and engage kids in keeping, filleting, cooking and eating the fish they catch with [Lesson 6:5 – Eating Fish](#) [PDF](#).

The activity of fishing “immerses” students in their aquatic environment with a “deeper kind of learning” that is relevant because you are engaging them with the real world in their neighborhoods where they live; and eating the fish they catch can bring a deeper awareness of their interconnection with their aquatic environment, and with the natural world. That sense of connection/or awareness of our vital “relationship” with the natural world is a powerful catalyst for igniting a reverence for nature and all who share the world with us.

Connecting to Your Food From the Inside-Out

The key to forging in your students a conscious relationship with what and how they eat is to not stop with the eating and tasting – but to take how we eat one step further. Feeling that you are what you eat starts by seeing where it comes from and engaging in and experiencing the entire process of getting it to your plate and in your stomach – and it becomes personal and meaningful when you also weave inside-out reflection

throughout the process.

Holistic learning personally involves each student: not only mentally with information and concepts, but also physically with movement, developing skills, practice – by getting them outdoors and involving their bodies, and emotionally – through discovering and recognizing their individual interests and strengths and engaging them in learning that is relevant and fun (which is what play is all about, isn't it?), and spiritually/meaningfully – through intentional, internal reflection.

Mindful Eating

Use journaling, discussion, and other techniques for thoughtful reflection to guide your students in identifying, clarifying and thinking about *how they are feeling and experiencing each step of the process* – from learning fishing skills to going fishing to choosing recipes and preparing and eating their fish – and sharing and celebrating their success and how it all makes them feel.

Catching, cooking and eating fish they've caught themselves, with reflective "mindfulness" can help students become more aware of where all of their food comes from – and how they eat – and how all of our food comes from the living things from the land and water- and how they, too, are part of the food chain – and ecosystems where they live.

The Center for Mindful Eating (TCME) says that "mindful eating has the powerful potential to transform people's relationship to food and eating, to improve overall health, body image, relationships and self-esteem."

Mindful eating involves many components such as:

- learning to make choices in beginning or ending a meal based on awareness of hunger and satiety cues;
- learning to identify personal triggers for mindless eating, such as emotions, social pressures, or certain foods;
- valuing quality over quantity of what you're eating;
- appreciating the sensual, as well as the nourishing, capacity of food;
- feeling deep gratitude that may come from appreciating and experiencing food

The Story of Pop

If the kids want soda on the menu with their fish, what might happen when you immerse them in the "story of pop" and take the corn from your classroom garden to make high fructose corn syrup, artificial coloring and flavoring... and reflect on how many cans of soda they think they've put into their bodies.

Recycle Those Empty Soda Cans

If you don't have a set of fishing poles for taking your kids fishing – check out [Lesson 5:3 - Pop Can Casting](#) PDF. After eating the fish they've caught with their pop can casters your students might think of lots of ways that re-using the pop can can be healthier "inside" – and more fun "outside" - than drinking pop!

Resources:

[How to Get Your Kids to Eat Fish](#) by Michael Byrd

[How to Get Your kids to Eat Fish - Coconut Fish Recipe](#) - video posted on Monkeysee.com

[Kid Friendly Recipes for Getting Your Kids to Eat Fish](#) by "Mommy Knows Everything"

[How To Really Enjoy Your Meal](#)

[Center for Mindful Eating](#) - a forum for professionals across all disciplines interested in developing, deepening and understanding the value and importance of mindful eating

[Making a Pop Can Caster Video](#)

"You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment." - Henry David Thoreau

"Live the life you've dreamed - Henry David Thoreau