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Dietetics as an intersectional exercise of sensitivity

Dietética como exercício interseccional da sensibilidade

Abstract

This essay is dedicated to problematizing the teaching and professional practice in Dietetics, based on the experience built over the last decade, in the Nutrition course of the School of Public Health of the University of São Paulo. The neutrality and regulatory character of this discipline are questioned to rethink it from an intersectional prism, for an in-depth analysis of the oppressions that cross food practices, and for the recognition of otherness and diversity. As a possible way for Dietetics, the intersectional exercise of sensitivity in professional practice is instigated. This admits eating (and incorporating), listens, and provides centrality to people's histories, relationships, and contexts, to support the production of food and nutritional care. Necessary discussions about intervening and influencing are listed as follows; relationships between food, gender, and sexualities; crossings between racism, health, food, and culinary practices; the impact of social class on the subjective and objective facets of food; and the confluent and contradictory narratives that cross eating in current times. The essay also features supplementary teaching materials. With these reflections on teaching and acting in nutrition, we hope to open avenues to involve Dietetics and the praxis of the nutritionist.

Keywords: Dietetics. Teaching. Professional Training. Intersectionality. Sensitivity.

Resumo

Este ensaio se dedica a problematizar a prática docente e profissional em Dietética, a partir da experiência construída na última década no curso de Nutrição da Faculdade de Saúde Pública da Universidade de São Paulo. A neutralidade e o caráter regulatório desta disciplina são questionados, a fim de repensá-la a partir de um prisma interseccional para uma análise aprofundada das opressões que atravessam as práticas alimentares e para o reconhecimento da alteridade e da diversidade. Como via possível para a Dietética, é instigado o exercício interseccional da sensibilidade no fazer profissional, que admite o comer (e o incorporar) e dá ouvidos e centralidade a histórias, relações e contextos das pessoas, a fim de fundamentar a produção do cuidado alimentar e nutricional. São elencadas necessárias discussões sobre intervir e influir; relações entre alimentações, gêneros e sexualidades; atravessamentos entre racismo, saúde e práticas alimentares e culinárias; impactos da classe social nas facetas subjetivas e objetivas da alimentação; e as confluentes e contraditórias narrativas que atravessam o comer nos tempos atuais. O ensaio também apresenta materiais didáticos complementares. Com estas reflexões sobre o ensino e a atuação em nutrição, espera-se abrir caminhos para implicar a Dietética e a práxis da/o nutricionista.

Palavras-chave: Dietética, Ensino, Formação Profissional, Interseccionalidade, sensibilidade.

PRELUDE

"There is no innocent dietetics" - Onfray¹

"Argh, I'm sick of demigods!

Where are there people in the world?" - Álvaro de Campos/Fernando Pessoa²

INTRODUCTION

This essay is by itself a provocation. I intend to instigate in all those who teach and learn Dietetics new questions within the discipline and its teaching, without, in any way, configuring new hegemonies. I will sustain a critical reading of Dietetics and try to bring something new to the table, something that falls between the indigestible and the delicious. It is not, therefore, a report of teaching experience,^{1a} although it reflects a ten-year path in the construction of the discipline of Dietetics at the School of Public Health of the University of São Paulo, which has already culminated in some publications.³⁻⁶

The starting point is a critique of how healthy eating is produced discursively, and how it compromises the training and performance of the nutritionist. We have established a medicalized, idealized, and normative (perhaps even dogmatic) pattern of healthy eating, supported by the status of the "truth" of scientific knowledge. This projects health as an individual and fundamental goal of life and creates an amalgam between it, youth and slimness.^{7,8}

I deal here, therefore, with regulatory Dietetics, one that bases the professional practice of the nutritionist on its laws, measures, rules, calculations, adequacies, recommendations, and prescriptions. This, without the possibility of putting them in dialectics, nor of thinking about the conditions that engendered the production of this knowledge. Regulatory Dietetics that promotes commodifications, norms, simplifications, production of docile bodies, and is based on the average subject and his object body.^{4,9} A Dietetics that contributes to the formatting and plastering of "life practices [and food, we add] in abstract models, with its manuals on the 'art' of living well and of making people live at any cost".¹⁰

I see this Dietetics constituting our education, about which Viana et al. affirm, based on Maria Lúcia Magalhães Bosi:⁸

This accentuated focus on the biological culminates in the current state of excessive rationality of the food and nutritional process, mainly because it treats it only from the physicalist perspective of nutrients and their relationship with the organism. Considering such a process only from what occurs inside a body deprives it of the possibility of contemplating it within the context of society, whose core offers countless possibilities of representation and meaning that food can acquire along the intertwined (intersubjective) trajectories of individuals.

Lastly, Demétrio⁹ concluded that this approach can contribute to making nutritionists uncritical, non-historical, technical individuals, with such a commitment to nutrients, that they practically forget their commitment to people's subjectivities and social transformations.

^a Reports of teaching experience are more frequent in publications in the field of Food and Nutrition. The essay format, less usual, is more appropriate, as it has allowed the author's theoretical perspectives and arguments to be interspersed. The first person singular will be used precisely to express such arguments, and the first person plural will be used to refer to the classes of Dietetics teachers and nutritionists.

Thus, Onfray states that there is no innocent Dietetics because it "informs about the will to be and to become, about the archetypal characteristics of a life, a thought, a system and a work".¹ There is neither innocence, nor neutrality. When teaching is based exclusively on the evidence-based approach,^b for example, there is already a choice, a desire, a direction of thinking that is not neutral. Thus, we have to recognize that the teaching of Dietetics produces and reproduces the hegemonic power of the *status quo*. In general, a teaching that opts for modern, cartesian, positivist and biomedical scientific rationality, in the midst of so many epistemes. We naturalize exercising, producing and reproducing power, and we do it, constantly, without perhaps even questioning the power of, for example, deciding what goes into the mouth of the other.⁷ In this process, we prevent Dietetics from working on what Haraway¹¹ calls partial, locatable, and critical knowledge. This allows Science, and in this case Dietetics, to be held responsible for its promises and its destructive monsters.

I also reflect on who the average subject in Dietetics is, so that later I can cross-dress it in complexity. For now, who is this subject, the protagonist of our recommendations, our exercises, and case studies? What do we need to frame it? We usually think of health status, age, height, weight, and naturalized sex as a result of biology and level of physical activity. But what is his/her/their gender and from what gender perspectives are we speaking? What is his/her/their race? What is his /her/their life story? And if Fischler¹² is correct when he states that "Man is an omnivore who feeds on meat, vegetables, and the imaginary: food leads to biology, but it is not reduced to it; the symbolic, the signs, the myths, the ghosts also feed and compete to regulate our food", what symbolic and subjective imaginary foods feed the average subject? Here I resume the prelude by declaring: "Argh, I'm sick of demigods! Where are there people in the world?"²

Dietetics needs to be hungrier for people.

What happens when we turn to this hunger

Eating is far from being a banal process. If Dietetics is hungry for individuals (or people) and eats these people, it incorporates them.¹² Once the boundaries between the internal and external world are crossed, people eaten and incorporated become part of Dietetics and present their layers, needs, desires, and drives. It will be up to us, professors of Dietetics, at this moment to listen to such people, centering the praxis^c of Dietetics on them, embracing their complexity.^{13,14}

From the outset, the processes of training in Nutrition need to recognize that we are in the middle of a gendered profession,¹⁵ positioned in such a way that it does not see gender as a positioning.¹⁶ Nor does it distinguish the experiences of people of different genders (and, even more, of other social markers of difference that intersect with gender, such as color/race, social class, sexuality, body size, among others).¹⁶ We will have to recognize and deconstruct relations of power and inequality that permeate the teaching and practice of Dietetics, as well as our political and pedagogical projects.

^b This essay does not aim to deny the importance of scientific evidence between food and health, but rather to propose reflections, generally counter-hegemonic.

^c Praxis is a complex concept, which crosses several fields of knowledge (such as Philosophy, Sociology, and Education, among others) and which is central to several authors (such as, for example, Paulo Freire, Kant, Marx, Gramsci, Habermas, and Adorno). This article was based on Freire's conceptualization of praxis, which, very simply, thinks of it as reflection and action, as an indissoluble unity and constitutive pair, constructed by the human being on the world in order to transform it.¹³ Based on this author, Conte¹⁴ proposes something that dialogues perfectly with the propositions of this article: "Nothing is more imperative than to continue theorizing against orthodox practice, seeking radicality and theoretical depth, committed to criticality, and not just to merely affirmative practice. Human action is sensitive and necessary to read and interpret the world, to develop the learning of concepts that open spaces for questioning and criticism as a possibility of a thought of resistance".

Since eating, incorporating and listening are, audacious movements, they lead us to a place of extreme power, because there all paths are possible. We arrive at a crossroads, a place where intersectionality is built, as a theoretical and methodological tool, and an analytical offering.⁶ Collins & Bilge¹⁷ defined intersectionality as a perspective:

[...] which investigates how intersectional power relations influence social relations in societies marked by diversity, as well as individual experiences in everyday life. As an analytical tool, intersectionality considers that the categories of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, ethnicity, and age group, among others, are interrelated and mutually shaped. Intersectionality is a way of understanding and explaining the complexity of the world, people, and human experiences.

In a work of this path that thinks about the training and praxis of the nutritionist, Demétrio & Scagliusi⁶ constructed an epistemic approximation between intersectionality and the field of Food and Nutrition:

Corroborating the metaphor of intersection and crossroads, we affirm that several axes of power – race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, body size, age, (dis)capacities, among others – make up the avenues and paths that structure the terrain of health care, including food and nutrition.

Thus, based on the dialogue with intersectionality, the authors evolved from "Extended Clinical Nutrition",¹⁸ to "Expanded and Implicated Clinical Nutrition".⁶ This name brings forth the idea that the nutritionist is involved, and that he or she does so in an intersectional way. To this end, reflecting on their own work and its action on the relations of power and oppression would be essential. It is necessary to think that food and nutritional care – and Dietetics – can generate inequalities in the care of people, in their aesthetic and existential multiplicities, when the structures of power are not taken into account. In other words, what turns should a highly privileged nutritionist, for example, take to understand the production and strategies of life, health, and food of socio-historically subaltern subjects, such as poor, black, fat people, women, Indigenous people, trans people, travesti, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, asexuals, pansexuals, queer and intersex, elderly people, and people with disabilities? In what ways should our counseling stop disregard the structural and intersectional oppressions that prevent healthy eating from being a possibility? How can we expand our "methods, techniques, and epistemologies of assessment and care, seeking humanization, comprehensiveness, and implication with people's singularities in the context of clinical-nutritional care"?⁶

Following this theoretical framework trail, I question: how do we involve Dietetics? It is therefore appropriate to situate the nutritionist as a political agent, involved in an emancipatory, participatory, and socially referenced praxis. Intersectionality becomes a key to looking at the other, at diversity and otherness. It is seen here as a strategy for the work of social justice, including food and nutrition. However, intersectionality alone may not satisfy, so I add sensitivity as its ally. As a companion of Expanded and Implicated Clinical Nutrition, I think, as a praxis, of **Dietetics as an intersectional exercise of sensitivity**.

Since I've already addressed intersectionality, I'll turn to sensibility. Sensibility is thought of here as a doing/existing in the world that faces the challenge of care (including food and nutrition) as a living labor, in action, an embodied relationship.¹⁹ Being considered as a soft technology^d, it makes the debate more

^d We are using the concept of health technologies as proposed by Merhy.²⁰ These are considered "hard technologies", linked to equipment; "soft-hard technologies" those linked to professional knowledge; and "soft technologies" those relational technologies, of encounter. For the author, the functioning of health services is ideal when light technologies order the use of all the others.

complex, given that the exclusive use of hard technologies can fall into the norms, simplifications, commodifications, and production of docile bodies discussed above. Sensibility in professional practice consists of centering interpersonal relationships and critical, broad, and reflective reading of oneself, of the other, of eating, cooking, caring, of being and of existing in this world. More than an innate characteristic, sensibility can be instigated, and we believe that Dietetics can turn itself by placing sensibility as a foundation for the production of food and nutritional care.

Certainly, this is a challenge for teachers. Two works from other (inter)professional fields help in this search. Prado et al.¹⁹ discuss sensibility as a plasma element for critical-creative education in nursing. It is interesting how the article addresses several issues of social commitment, which speak to intersectionality, and values the imponderable space of affectively relating to the other, and the multidimensionality and complexity of human existence. Multidimensionality and complexity are present in the subjects of care and also in students, professors and nutritionists, who can access and rescue them via sensitivity. Finally, although to speak of sensibility is to speak of compassion, empathy, listening and encounter, it is also to speak of a production of another type of knowledge.¹⁹

The second work consists of the powerful experience of the Laboratory of Sensibilities of the Institute of Health and Society of UNIFESP, in which students and professors from various courses, including Nutrition, participate.²¹ When reflecting on their experiments, the members of the Laboratory point out a crucial component for sensibility in professional practice– the difference between intervention and interference²¹:

Intervention can suppose the application of certain models, ideologemes, and defined symbolizations. In this game, the intervention would seek to transform experiences in a certain direction. One tends to want to rise to a high level, to attain illumination, to carry out a mission. In contrast, interferences can deal with courtesies, subtleties that try not to overwhelm situations, opening themselves up to non-pre-established directions. A simplifying intervention can focus on the complications of cases, experiences, equipment, and streets; there is an order that crushes the complexities. Another problem: voluntarism can entangle interventions and interferences. Hence the issue of "working out" – always linked to models and parameters – and a demand to control the result.

In Dietetics, the intervention would correspond to the prescription, made by the holder of knowledge and power, the nutritionist, based on the application of his/her models of laws, measures, rules, calculations, adaptations and recommendations. This is done while seeking the redemption of the health and diet of the other. The intervention brings up simplification once again, as it reduces all potentiality and complexity of an interference, made in an intersectional and sensitive way.

Interference, on the other hand, is connected to sensitivity through the production of subjectivity, through the construction of what unfolds in qualified listening during an encounter. It is shared between two people who walk side by side in the production of food and nutritional care²¹:

Interferences do not claim full understanding. Interference is the production of subjectivity – living knowledge that does not necessarily pass through the "mirror of consciousness" [...]. What is of interest is a rigor in the connections and montages of the interferences coming from curatorships that create a field of collective management and gestation, spaces to create and unfold ideas together, mix and recombine them.

Interfering by caring and planning is different from intervening by applying and prescribing, as the former is aligned with sensitive, plural, socioculturally implicated, partial, critical, and locatable knowledge. From the sensitive interference, we can view food and nutritional care as a path of mutual learning and affectation, because food is never just food. Food moves and is moved by the stories, relationships, and contexts of each human being and grouping. Highlighting and working on sensitivity allows us to see how delicate (and precious) it is to have this domain as a raw material in the profession. This also takes the idea of sensitive interference to another level in clinical practice, not as an error or chance, but as something that can and should be taught as soft technology. This in contrast to the emphasis on teaching "how to calculate and prescribe". Thus, in the supplementary material I present suggestions for support texts and a proposal for an exercise, in which students place the lives and deaths of the other in dialectic with their worlds. This exercise aims to provoke and bring feelings, affection, and creativity into the discipline. In addition, it presses the "pause" button on the desire to prescribe diets.

I also emphasize the need for the term **exercise** in the proposition presented here. Exercise implies construction, in the "provisionally finished" or "permanently unfinished"^{e,22}. The more we think intersectionally and sensitively affect ourselves with the stories and encounters permeated by food, the more we can take responsibility for the consequences of interference in it, in a continuum. With intersectionality as a theoretical framework, this exercise also never ceases to be political.

Thus, although food guides, recommendations, and nutritional calculations are also part of Dietetics as an intersectional exercise of sensitivity, they are not its center. I believe that calculus does not fluctuate by itself, it cannot be an end in itself, an abstraction. Returning to Demétrio & Scagliusi, if calculation is not intersectionally implicated, it will be of little use in a world in which inequities and intersecting power relations condition the ways of eating (or not eating).⁶

I work, in Dietetics, what is not expected of it: the intersections between diets, genders, and sexualities; the intersections between racism, health and food, and culinary practices. The impact of social class on the subjective and objective facets of food, and the confluent and contradictory narratives that cross eating in current times and how this guides dietary planning. It is not, however, a matter of inserting some classes at the beginning of the course. Or to only rely on the approach of these themes in previous disciplines more linked to the Human and Social Sciences, without a subsequent articulation. Either these aspects become the guiding thread of what Dietetics is or they are lost, like anecdotes that have been told, but that do not enter the field of food and nutritional care.

In conjunction with dialogued and practical lectures on these topics, we use a single case study as a pedagogical strategy (available in the supplementary material). It covers the entire course as an axis, with exercises of reflection and analysis in each class, and which culminates in dietary planning that must be adequate in terms of food and nutrition, In addition to being healthy, consistent with the subjectivity of the case, culturally appropriate, emancipatory, enjoyable and viable for the sanitary, social and economic conditions of the case. A planning that no longer claims to be innocent and that, gradually, distances itself from intervention and that is composed of the intersectional exercise of sensitivity. The case study is complex and imbricated in intersecting layers of oppression and resistance, which link food, culinary practices, and health conditions to issues of taste, memories, territory, food environment, cultural identity, social class, gender, sexuality, race/color, access to education and work, commensality, the COVID-19 pandemic, and food and nutrition insecurity. Bringing these dimensions to dietary planning concretizes their importance in the practice of the nutritionist and allows him/her to be involved.

^e The authors use these terms in a definition of research, but we believe that they apply here as well.

But is anyone still hungry?

Still in the field of the sensible, I think that Dietetics is hungry for food. Yes, food. That which is not only edible and nutritious, but which has symbolic significance.⁸ That which has a smell, color, taste, that requires cunning to turn the tie, to find the point. That which comes from intense oral history. That which chills, that fills the mouth with saliva, that rejoices us. Where, in Dietetics, is this food?

Cooking and eating must be thought of in dialectics, with our analytical prism (intersectionality and sensitivity), in a perspective that values them, but does not romanticize them. Keane wrote that "advice on healthy eating is hard to swallow".²³ Dietetics has to be close to the kitchen to produce pleasurable and desirable health, and here I emphasize the importance of Nutrition courses assuming the kitchen as a didactic space. In the Nutrition course at the School of Public Health of the University of São Paulo, this proposition was bravely constructed by Prof. Dr. Betzabeth Slater Villar, who revolutionized the previously called "Laboratory of Dietetic Technique", proposed as a "cold" space by making it the "Didactic Kitchen and Laboratory of Culinary Procedures and Techniques Applied to Nutrition", a "boiling" space. More than a semantic difference, the teacher was responsible for a new praxis in the unit, which allowed the preparation of teaching, research, and extension within the kitchen.

In the supplementary material, I present a lesson plan that can instigate this epistemic turn, as it crosses cuisine, the social markers of difference (even if superficially), and food preferences and aversions, which are also not innocent.

An interest in food and cooking provides people, in general, with greater cooking skills and healthier eating habits.²⁴ Social Sciences and Humanities in Health, however, raise questions. Especially due to the intersection between gender, race/color and social class, which add complexity to such understandings.²⁵ This is because culinary work naturalized as suitable for some people (usually women and, especially, black women), can oppress them and condition their participation in the domestic and public life spaces. As we stated earlier, advice on healthy eating often disregards such structural and intersectional oppressions, which make the kitchen a space of "suffocation" and prevent healthy eating from even being a possibility. However, oppression is also responded to with assemblage and resistance that produces more plural existence, in which the kitchen itself can become a space of pleasure, power, and even devotion.²⁵ Understanding these complex relationships, which go beyond the presence or absence of culinary practice, is essential for Dietetics. All these complex and contradictory instances about cooking and eating in an intersectional perspective are present in our case study, to compose a concrete object of approximation, reflection and incorporation in the implicated praxis of the nutritionist.

Final words

When I was the coordinator of the Nutrition course, I participated in a National Meeting of Professional Training, promoted by the CFN/CRN system. There was a discussion about what the "heart" of the Nutrition course was, and many of us agreed that it was Dietetics. Here, in this text, I tried to situate this heart in another beat, allied to the teaching practice and the proposition of Expanded and Implied Clinical Nutrition⁶ –after all, the Clinic is also based on Dietetics. Without the mask of innocence and with the premise that their knowledge is partial, locatable and critical, I take Dietetics to the intersectional crossroads and, there, I only have the opportunity to ignite a spark so that the intersectional exercise of sensibility is a possible way to implicate Dietetics and the praxis of the nutritionist.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL 1 – Suggested supporting texts, in addition to the references cited in the article

Lima LM, Trindade IO, Gois I, Rodrigues FB, Gomes S, Reis T, organizadores. Guia de cuidado e atenção nutricional à população LGBTQIA+. Brasília, DF: Conselho Regional de Nutricionistas da 1ª Região; Natal: Insecta Editora. 33 p. Available from: https://www.casaum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Guia-de-cuidado-e-atencao-nutricional-a-populacao-LGBTQIA_1edicao.pdf.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL 2 – Exercise proposal to instigate sensitivity

Look for the song "*Construção*", composed and sung by Chico Buarque. Listen to it several times and read its lyrics. Notice that the song narrates three deaths. Build your story from each death.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL 3 – The Case study that has been the axis of the discipline of Dietetics, at the School of Public Health of the University of São Paulo

Julia is a person who identifies herself as a cisgender, heterosexual, and brown woman. She is forty years old and has been married for fourteen years to Miguel. They have two children: a 13-year-old boy (Marcelo) and a five-year-old girl (Mariana). While they were married, they lived in a small, rented, two-bedroom apartment in the neighborhood of Tatuapé, in the East Zone of São Paulo.

Her family was from Minas Gerais, in the city of Ubá. She lived on a small farm, with her parents, her three sisters, and her younger brother. Her father was white and her mother was black. Her mother did not like to talk about it very much, but Julia discovered that her great-grandmother had been enslaved. However, she had managed to buy her

freedom with the delicacies she sold on the streets of her city. The farm where the family lived was simple and small, but it had orange, jaboticaba, gabioba, grumixama (Brazilian cherry), pitanga, guava, and uvaia trees. The children loved to eat jaboticabas, grumixamas, pitangas, and guavas on the tree. The family also planted corn, onions, taioba (tannia), chayote, zucchini, pumpkin, cabbage, parsley, chives, garlic, okra, and ora-pro-nobis (lemonvine). They ate part of the corn and part was given to the animals in the chicken coop. The kitchen was not inside the house. It was at the bottom of the land, after the vegetable garden, and had a wood stove. Dona Ilma, Julia's mother, spent most of her time there, in addition to the time she took to care for the plantations and the chicken coop. In the open kitchen, she made uvaia juice, cheese bread, and biscuits for the children, in addition to all the everyday food. It was simple and hearty food and Julia remembers very well the delicious smell of that kitchen. Her favorite foods were tropeiro beans and feijoada (bean stew) from her mother, who said that she had learnt the secret spice of the latter from her mother, who had in turn, learnt from her grandmother, and so on. It was a family recipe, which no one ever wrote down, but which was preserved orally. Dona Ilma also made goiabada, gabioba liqueur, cheese, and smoked sausages there. The family sold guava paste and liquor to a grocery store in the urban part of the municipality. They also traded with their neighbors, offering eggs, chickens, fruits, corn, goiabada, and liquor. In return, they received milk, beans and pork. Mr. Nicanor, Julia's father, worked on a slightly larger farm, with cattle and pigs. The problem was that, on the way back, he used to stop at another farm where there was a drip distiller. On nights when he came home drunk, it was better for the mother and the children to be asleep. Whoever looked at him, was beaten. Because of this, Julia remembers well the fear she felt at night. When it got dark and her father was not yet home, she and her mother would yell at everyone to go to sleep. Sometimes, everyone would be lying down already, but the little brother would wet the bed and they had to get up, mother and children, to clean everything, in fear and in a hurry.

Julia really liked to go to school. She travelled by bicycle. She had many friends there and loved her teachers. When she was in high school, a very good teacher encouraged her to go to college, something she had dreamed of, but not thought about. She wanted to leave home and the city, go to Belo Horizonte. Julia told her mother, as they got along very well, about her dream; she was very happy. Her mother began to save a little extra money from sales and, thus, Julia went to study law at the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Her father only found out later that she had gone.

In Belo Horizonte, Julia lived for a while at the house of a friend of her aunt and did everything to make ends meet and ensure her livelihood. She worked as a supermarket cashier, sold cakes to her classmates, did cleaning. She felt a little ashamed, because she was the only black student and who did these jobs. She also never had a black teacher as a reference, which made her feel isolated. In one year, she was able to move to the University Residence and have her meals at the University Restaurant (UR). She woke up, took a shower, ate her breakfast in the UR and went to work at the supermarket. At night she would rush to dinner in the UR and get to class on time. After class, she prepared lunch that she would take as a lunch box for lunch the next day. Julia missed her mother and her food, but she was very happy with her studies and new life in the city. After a year, she got an internship to help as a secretary in the Undergraduate Commission of the Faculty of Humanities. Living and working on campus, she started going to more parties. At one party, she met a charming young man, who danced well and was called Miguel. Miguel was a cisgender, white man. He said he was doing accounting, which was a half-truth: he was younger and was studying as an accounting technician, not in college, as had been implied. The two went out more often and started dating. Eventually, she forgave the lie. When she finished college, she started working as a secretary in a law firm and became engaged to Miguel. Julia was not in a hurry to get married, but with a fiancé, she felt safer to visit her mother in Ubaí. Every time they went, they left with a huge bag of fruits, vegetables, and Dona Ilma's specialties: fruit jams, liqueur, sausage, cheese bread, and biscuits. They began to notice that, with each visit, Dona Ilma seemed more dejected, slow, and heavy hearted. Julia took her to appointments in Belo Horizonte and the diagnoses were not good: high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, and depression. She was prescribed diuretics, oral hypoglycemic agents, and antidepressants. Doctors also recommended that she reduce her consumption of sugar, salt and fat. They forgot to ask and understand that the little cookies, that pie made with lard, that well-cured cheese, that sausage that she smoked herself were the greatest joys of her difficult life. That kitchen was her territory, no one messed with her there, neither husband nor doctor.

Unfortunately, a year later, Dona Ilma had a stroke and died. Julia was devastated. After that, Julia could no longer go to Ubaí, neither to see her brothers nor her father. Miguel was concerned about Julia's sadness and suggested that they go elsewhere. Part of his family lived in São Paulo and they thought it would be good to get married and live outside of Minas Gerais. Julia's boss recommended her to a fellow São Paulo lawyer and she started working there, also as a secretary. Miguel jumped from job to job and eventually became a driving teacher at a driving school. The two worked hard, took the crowded red line of the subway daily, and took care of the children, with the help of Miguel's aunt, Cecília. Even with the stress of São Paulo, Julia considered her life good: she liked her work, her children were healthy, her husband was affectionate and she made good friends. She just missed her mother and her food very much.

Julia ate everything and loved vegetables, sautéed with plenty of garlic and onions. She especially loved bitter vegetables, such as Catalogna chicory, always in a stew. From time to time she found a little taioba in the square that she took to the children to play, and brought it home with great joy. She also loved pork, fish, cassava flour, along with natural fruit juices and sweets.

The pandemic hit her family very hard. She was locked in the house with her family for a year. Julia worked at home, but was constantly interrupted by the children, who needed attention or food. Three months after the beginning of the pandemic, the driving school where Miguel worked made "job cuts" and he was fired. As a result, the family's financial situation became complicated and Julia started to be the only provider for their home. Her salary was R\$ 1,700. This greatly impacted the purchase of food. At that time, Júlia stopped leaving the house to shop, as only Miguel went out. He bought monthly supplies in a warehouse, to buy the basics at better prices. These included: rice, beans, sugar, coffee, cassava flour, etc. In this purchase he did not have much difficulty, only with the cleaning products. He did not go to the grocery store like Julia used to do, just in a small supermarket, once a week, also alone. Miguel felt a little lost there, because he didn't know exactly where everything was and it took him a long time to get everything Julia had put on the shopping list. In the fruit and vegetable section, it was even more complicated, because sometimes the vegetables were nameless and he didn't know which was which. He could never find the Catalogna chicory. Moreover, he also found it difficult to choose which fruits were good. As a result, natural fruit juices were replaced by artificial refreshments. He would still buy some treats for the children, because he would feel very bad as a father to take it away from them. But they had to stop ordering pizza after being fired, something that didn't please anyone in the house, not even Julia, who saw pizza as a break.

In addition to working at home, and the problem of sharing the computer with Marcelo (for *online classes*), she had to take care of the house, the children and make breakfast, lunch and dinner. Miguel "helped" (a term used by himself) a little to take care of his daughter, but did not contribute to any domestic and culinary tasks. He said that he couldn't even fry an egg and that it was no use "helping", because if he washed a glass Julia complained that it hadn't been cleaned properly.

Julia felt sad and exhausted. She missed Minas Gerais, the warmth of her mother's food. She had a lot of difficulty in deciding what to make for lunch and dinner and thought that television did not help, because either the recipes were difficult, or the ingredients were not for her pocket. Sometimes there was rice or beans left over and she didn't know what to do with them. There was a night when there was a little rice in the fridge, a small yam, a small potato, four chuck steaks and a tomato. So, dinner was a lot of small foods: a little rice, a very small steak for each one, a slice of tomato for each, a little bit of boiled yams and fries. No one went hungry (although Miguel complained about not having gone to sleep with a full belly), but she had to prepare a lot of things to make a set that was enough, that is, she worked hard. Moreover, in her head, she blamed herself, thinking of her mother who always set a full table, even though she was poor.

At night, when everyone went to sleep, Julia would finish some work on the computer, and have a moment without Marcelo, or ironed clothes. After everything was finished, she would sit on the sofa in the living room, smoke a cigarette and eat some sweets, even if they were improvised (it was usually a mixture of powdered milk, undiluted, with chocolate milk). It was a moment of silence, which was rare in the house, but also of worry about tomorrow.

In 2021, Júlia returned to face-to-face work and Miguel got a job at another driving school, which improved the family's finances. However, Miguel undertook an attitude of someone who did not need to contribute anything, in terms of child care, culinary, and household chores, because, according to him, Júlia "had taken care of everything" during the

pandemic. This brought a lot of sadness to her who, and after a long time of loneliness as a couple, they decided to separate in 2022.

Now Júlia lives with her children in a one-bedroomed, rented apartment still in the East Zone, but in the Itaquera neighborhood. The apartment has garbage collection, water and sewage treatment, but the gas is not piped, so she had to buy a cylinder. She talked to the owner of the law firm about her situation, showed the perfection of her work and convinced her to promote her. Now, instead of being a secretary, she is a junior lawyer and receives R\$2,500 per month, which is less than what most of her colleagues in the same position receive. She is feeling fulfilled by finally practicing the profession for which she studied. She also feels freer, because she makes her own decisions and does not have to listen to constant complaints.

Currently, she is 1.60m tall and 61 kg. Her health is good, she only feels back pain due to the care of the children and cleaning up the mess they make. Julia has trouble with bowel movements and this bothers her a lot, as it produces bloating and gas. She feels embarrassed to go to the bathroom at work and, at home, Mariana stands behind the bathroom door, wanting to get her attention. She does not have time for physical activity, but she walks twenty minutes from her house to the subway (and vice versa), and takes dance classes once a week, for an hour, at a free community center she discovered near work. She loves this class and says that it is one of the best moments of the week, even though she has to have lunch "on the fly," because the class is during her lunch time. Her workday is eight hours long, and she spends most of this time sitting, working on the computer.

Now, she prepares breakfast and dinner for the family. She takes a lunch box with the leftovers from dinner to eat for lunch. She says she gets a little sick of eating the same food twice, but she doesn't know how to change the food from the dinner that goes into the lunch box, without having to cook it all over again. At work, her colleagues receive better salaries and go out for lunch at restaurants near Avenida Paulista. She has lunch in the pantry with the office boy and the office cleaner.

Júlia has been shopping at a small supermarket near her new apartment and at a grocery store on the weekend. Even with a higher salary, she has had financial difficulties, as the prices of food and cooking gas have risen a lot. Very rarely can she buy red meat. Usually she decides between eggs, sausages and mortadella. Her priority is feeding the children. She does everything to make sure there is no shortage of milk. She even stopped drinking milk in her coffee, to have more left over for the children. When leaving the subway, she usually buys what she calls "treats" (such as candies, lollipops, tapioca starch cookies, and stuffed cookies) to pamper the children, as she thinks this is a way to keep them happy since the pandemic and the separation. A major difficulty is the alimony. Often, Miguel contributes only R\$500 per month. He stays with the children two weekends a month, during which Julia takes the opportunity to rest. Her friends in the new building comment that it is not fair for Julia to spend many more days with the children, that this is an overload, but she does not know how to change the situation. Another difficulty is that, on his weekends, Miguel only takes the children to eat in cafeterias and fast food restaurants. Although Julia understands that he doesn't know how to cook, and that children like these foods, she worries that the children will get used to it and only want this type of food. She keeps thinking that she had so much contact with plants, vegetable gardens, fruit trees and the chicken coop in her childhood and her children have zero contact and that they must think that the milk comes from the carton.

She has continued with the habit of eating an improvised sweet at the end of the day, but without smoking anymore. If before she used to drink powdered milk mixed with chocolate, now she drinks coffee powder mixed with a lot of sugar, because it is cheaper.

With so many changes in her life, Júlia today is excited about tomorrow and feels happy again. Although she feels chronically tired and has to fight hard to provide good conditions for herself and the children, she thinks it's good to be able to make her own decisions. Thinking about her current life, she would like to have less work, with regards to food and the house, have more leisure time and, who knows, enter an app to meet a possible new partner. Thinking about the future, she would like to have good health, not to have the same diseases that her mother had, to stop paying rent and have her own house and to see her children in public college.

Below is a description of her current diet:

Time Location Companion Meal time	Food	Quantity in homemade measurements	Weight (g) or volume (mL)
5:30 am At home With son Marcelo 10 minutes	Pure black coffee	1 cup of tea (filled) with 3 teaspoons (filled) of white sugar	200mL of coffee 15g sugar
	French bread	1 unit	50g
	Margarine	4 knife tips (full)	24g
12:00 p.m. Pantry With colleagues 30 minutes	Boiled white rice	3 serving spoons (filled)	135g
	Boiled carioca beans	1.5 medium shell (full)	210g
	Roasted and already seasoned cassava flour	2 tablespoons (filled)	32g
	Scrambled egg	1 medium egg	50g
	Chayote cooked and sautéed with soybean oil, onion, garlic and salt	2 serving spoons (filled)	90g
	Cheapest brand soda	1 small plastic bottle	250mL
3:00 p.m. In the hallway of the office, with fellow lawyers 5 minutes	Water and salt biscuit	Three units	24g
	Black coffee	1 plastic cup of coffee with 1 teaspoon (full) of white sugar	50 mL of coffee 5g sugar
5:00 p.m. Work desk Alone 5 minutes	Banana	1 average unit	86g
8:00 p.m. At home With the children 30 minutes	Boiled white rice	2 serving spoons (filled)	90g
	Boiled carioca beans	1 medium ladle (full)	140g
	Roasted and already seasoned cassava flour	1 tablespoon (full)	16g
	Cooked sausage	1 average unit	50g
	Smooth lettuce	2 medium leaves	20g
	Carmen Tomato	4 medium slices	60g
	Salad dressing	1 teaspoon mixed oil and 1 small pinch of salt	1.6g oil 0.5g salt
	Bahia Orange	1 average unit	180g
11:00 p.m. At home Alone 10 minutes	Improvised sweet: ground coffee mixed with sugar	1 teaspoon of coffee powder and 3 teaspoons of white sugar	1.5g of ground coffee 15g sugar

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL 4 – Proposal for a lesson plan "Culinary practices as a complex element of sociocultural relations", known informally as "Chewing gum I mix with banana".

Diez-Garcia and Castro (2011) pointed out that cooking can be a creative space for food and nutritional care. Thus, we will use it, through the method of culinary improvisation (Deutscher et al., 2009), to assist in the development of the following competence: to develop a dietary plan that promotes healthy eating and pleasure, which is culturally, socially and



economically appropriate to the person for whom it is intended, paying attention to aspects of gender, sexualities, social class and race, among others. A dietary plan that is associated with socially and environmentally healthy food systems and that is inclusive and emancipatory. The class will be developed in the Didactic Kitchen and Laboratory of Culinary Procedures and Techniques Applied to Nutrition

Students' preparation: read the following text before class: Diez-García RW, de Castro IR. Culinary as an object of study and intervention in the field of Food and Nutrition. *CienSaudeColet* 2011;16:91-8. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21180818/>

Class script:

In this class you will work, through the method of culinary improvisation, the personalization of a meal for fictitious people, who have several social markers of difference, preferences and food aversions. You will receive a hypothetically planned lunch and you will have to change it based on the characteristics of the person. As a group, you will adapt this meal and cook it. At the end of the class, we will taste and discuss the reasons that justified the changes. You will need to use some ingredients from the original lunch and other extra ingredients, as shown below. All lunches should have a starter, a main course, a side dish and a dessert. Feel free to consult the Laboratory's books and the internet.

The room will be divided into 12 groups and each profile of diners will be drawn into two groups.

Hypothetically planned lunch:

- - Arugula salad with red onion and mango cubes, dressed with olive oil, lemon juice and salt.
- - Baked fish with potatoes, tomatoes and onions.
- - White rice with small pieces of broccoli.
- - Condensed milk pudding.

Ingredients of this hypothetical lunch:

- Salt
- Arugula
- Red onion
- Garlic
- Common onion
- Tomatoes
- Potatoes
- Broccoli
- Mango
- Tahiti lime
- Olive oil
- Soybean oil
- Tilapia
- White rice
- Sugar
- Condensed milk
- Whole milk
- Eggs
- Spices at will

Extra ingredients that can be used:

- Palm oil
- Bacon
- Plantain
- Cashew
- Carrot
- Coconut
- Cupuaçu
- Wheat flour

- White Beans
- Unflavored gelatin powder
- Yam
- Java apple
- Apple
- Unsalted butter
- Maroon cucumber
- Lemonvine
- Surinam cherry
- Cupuaçu pulp
- Semi-cured cheese
- Sapodilla
- Tapioca
- Yerba mate
- Coconut milk

Profile of diners

Names of diners	Description of diners	Food preferences and aversions
Renato	A cisgender, white, homosexual man, who calls himself "bear", administrative assistant, middle class, 42 years old, lives in São Paulo (SP).	He loves spicy, heavy and strongly flavored foods. He hates vegetables and eggs.
Camila	Cisgender woman, black, single mother of three children, heterosexual, domestic worker, lower class, 33 years old, lives in Ribeirão Pires (SP).	She can no longer stand to eat her own food daily, which she makes for herself and her children. She wants to eat the kind of food she cooks for her employer, but that she won't let her eat.
Jean-Luc	A 28-year-old black, bisexual, bartender at a bar in the Glicério region, a 28-year-old transgender man, a refugee from Haiti, lives in São Paulo (SP).	He loves well-seasoned food and misses Haitian food. He doesn't like raw vegetables.
Luana	Cisgender, brown, homosexual woman, event producer, upper middle class, 37 years old. She was born in Salvador (BA), Bahia, but lives in Porto Alegre (RS).	She loves northeastern food. She is allergic to fish and seafood.
Francine	Transgender, white, heterosexual woman, university professor, upper middle class, 45 years old, lives in Alfenas (MG).	She likes light meals that don't leave her bloated. She hates fruits.
Igor	Cisgender, brown, heterosexual man, Social Work student at UNIFESP, from the lower class, 22 years old, lives in São Vicente (SP)	He is vegan and does not like very sweet preparations. He prefers acidic and bitter flavors.



Questions to stimulate discussion after the presentation of the dishes and tasting:

- Let's adapt the famous phrase "You are what you eat". How did the characteristics of diners, their preferences and dislikes determine the culinary planning of the meal?
- Can you imagine diners eating this meal at what times and places? What would be the relationship between these culinary preparations and commensality?
- Was it easy or difficult to carry out this activity? What did you do that was particularly innovative and worked well? And what didn't work well? Why?
- Are there any ingredients that were missing?
- Did you miss any information about the diners? What?
- What did you learn most from this activity?
- If you could do it all over again, what would you do differently?
- (in closing): If you could define this class in one word, what would it be?

Questions to be answered individually and delivered in the next class:

- How can what was learnt in the creation and elaboration of a meal be expanded into the dietary planning of a day?
- Look for the song "*Chiclete eu misturo com banana*". Why do you think it's the informal name of this class?

Bibliographic References

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Note: if it is not possible to do the practical class, with the preparation of food, the hypothetical lunches can be planned in a theoretical way.