

The Enquiry of Food Culture Products, Practices and Perspectives: An Action Research on Teaching and Learning Food Culture from International Food Documentary Films

Authors : Tsuiping Chen

Abstract : It has always been an international consensus that food forms a big part of any culture since the old times. However, this idea has not been globally concretized until the announcement of including food or cuisine as intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2010. This announcement strengthens the value of food culture, which is getting more and more notice by every country. Although Taiwan is not one of the members of the United Nations, we cannot detach ourselves from this important global trend, especially when we have a lot of culinary students expected to join the world culinary job market. These students should have been well educated with the knowledge of world food culture to make them have the sensibility and perspectives for the occurring global food issues before joining the culinary jobs. Under the premise of the above concern, the researcher and also the instructor took on action research with one class of students in the 'Food Culture' course watching, discussing, and analyzing 12 culinary documentary films selected from one decade's (2007-2016) of Berlin Culinary Cinema in one semester of class hours. In addition, after class, the students separated themselves into six groups and joined 12 times of one-hour-long focus group discussion on the 12 films conducted by the researcher. Furthermore, during the semester, the students submitted their reflection reports on each film to the university e-portfolio system. All the focus discussions and reflection reports were recorded and collected for further analysis by the researcher and one invited film researcher. Glaser and Strauss' Grounded Theory (1967) constant comparison method was employed to analyze the collected data. Finally, the findings' results were audited by all participants of the research. All the participants and the researchers created 200 items of food culture products, 74 items of food culture practices, and 50 items of food culture perspectives from the action research journey through watching culinary documentaries. The journey did broaden students' points of view on world food culture and enhance their capability on perspective construction for food culture. Four aspects of significant findings were demonstrated. First, learning food culture through watching Berlin culinary films helps students link themselves to the happening global food issues such as food security, food poverty, and food sovereignty, which direct them to rethink how people should grow, share and consume food. Second, watching different categories of documentary food films enhances students' strong sense of responsibility for ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all people in every corner of the world. Third, watching these documentary films encourages students to think if the culinary education they have accepted in this island is inclusive and the importance of quality education, which can promote lifelong learning. Last but not least, the journey of the culinary documentary film watching in the 'Food Culture' course inspires students to take pride in their profession. It is hoped the model of teaching food culture with culinary documentary films will inspire more food culture educators, researchers, and the culinary curriculum designers.

Keywords : food culture, action research, culinary documentary films, food culture products, practices, perspectives

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