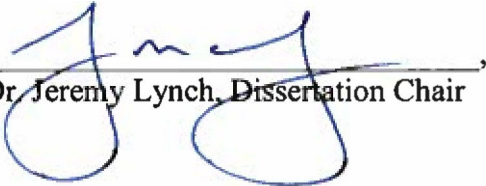


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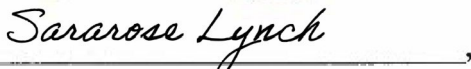
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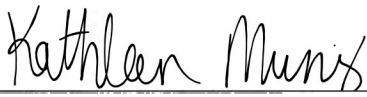
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THE EFFECTS OF COOKING INDEPENDENCE ON HIGH SCHOOL LIFE SKILLS
STUDENTS

A Dissertation

Presented to

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies

Department of Special Education

Slippery Rock University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctorate of Special Education

by

Meredith Capuano

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ABSTRACT

Funding for schools is historically always an issue. It is increasingly such an issue that schools have been taking away funding for practical arts classes such as cooking classes and allotting the money towards other academic areas. That change in funding ends up shutting down practical arts classes causing a loss of skills that students need to know for adulthood. Practical Arts classes specifically cooking classes can be beneficial for students placed in the life skills classroom because it allows them to increase their functional academics, and social interactions. These classes help build their self-esteem while integrating sensory skills as well as teaching health and nutrition, and the ever most important transition to adulthood skills also known as independence. It is imperative that practical arts classes are fully funded to not only meet the needs of students while in class but to but to increase their skills for independence and daily living.

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my husband Big Red, as we reflect on the journey called marriage we embarked on twenty-eight years ago, I am filled with gratitude. Never could I have imagined the remarkable path that lay ahead. Whether it was your reassuring voice urging me to persevere or your cheers celebrating my successes, you have been my rock through it all. And now, as I reach this milestone and bid farewell to my last class, I am filled with a sense of accomplishment and readiness to embrace the joys of life that lie ahead. Thank you for being my partner, and my confidant. Here's to the next chapter of our journey together, filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments.

To my son Callan, my biggest cheerleader, may this moment serve as a timeless reminder to you: never relinquish your determination. Set your sights on your aspirations and relentlessly pursue them. Your potential knows no bounds, and I have every confidence that you will achieve greatness. This dissertation stands as a testament of unwavering support, love, and PATIENCE you both have granted me and is yours as much as it is mine! With all my love and gratitude.

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Endless thanks to my research participants and the 2023-2024 semester one Farm to Table Students. This dissertation is dedicated to you, the bright minds whose curiosity, enthusiasm, and relentless pursuit of knowledge have fueled my passion for teaching and research. Your eagerness to learn, willingness to challenge yourselves, and dedication to academic excellence have inspired me every step of the way. I cannot wait to see the amazing things you do in life! No matter how old you get you will forever be my kids.

Special thanks to Eastern Wok for always delivering so quickly and keeping my belly full of delicious food so that my brain could function! The crazy afternoon and late night deliveries are what kept me going.

Lastly, Aunt Linda Capuano This dissertation is dedicated to you. Even when I called you crying because I couldn’t do it, your belief in my abilities has given me the confidence to pursue my dreams relentlessly, and your words of encouragement have fueled my determination to overcome every obstacle in my path. I am forever grateful for your presence in my life and for the countless ways you have shaped my journey with your kindness and wisdom. I would not be where I am today if it was not for your encouragement from the very beginning. As they say, when you get married you marry the family, well I am forever grateful to marry into an amazing family.

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CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION

At the heart of this study lies the exploration of how learning to cook independently impacts students with low incidence disabilities. These are individuals who may face challenges related to visual, hearing, or cognitive impairments, necessitating specialized support for their education. Placed typically in life skills classrooms, these students find a supportive environment conducive to their learning needs.

Using a changing-criterion, single-subject design methodology, my goal is to explore the transformative impact of practical arts education, with a specific emphasis on culinary skills. Practical arts courses provide a multifaceted learning journey, nurturing creativity, self-expression, and vital life competencies. Within our study environment, these courses span various disciplines, such as Family Consumer Science, Computer Science, Industrial Technology, and Art.

Building upon the literature review in Chapter Two, which highlights the importance of inclusive approaches for students with low incidence disabilities, I aim to enrich this discussion. Through an exploration of practical arts education, my endeavor to reveal significant insights into its influence on students' experiences. In essence, my study seeks to shape educational strategies and regulations, championing increased inclusivity and accessibility within educational institutions. By conducting thorough research and insightful examination, my goal is to equip educators, policymakers, and stakeholders with the tools to establish fairer learning atmospheres for every student.

This dissertation seeks to explore the impact of cooking lessons within an inclusive practical arts class on the independence of high school life skills students. At the core of this investigation is the research question: "Will cooking lessons in an inclusive practical arts class

increase independence for high school life skills students?" To rigorously examine this question, the study is structured around testing two hypotheses. The null hypothesis (H0) posits that there is no observable increase in independence among high school life skills students who participate in inclusive practical arts cooking classes. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis (H1) suggests a significant increase in independence for these students as a result of their participation in inclusive cooking classes. Through this research, I aim to provide empirical evidence to support or refute the hypothesis that inclusive practical arts education, specifically cooking lessons, can play a critical role in enhancing the independence of high school life skills students.

In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) mandated that public schools ensure a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities (Borosan, 2017). Despite efforts to foster inclusive classrooms over the past four decades, persistent challenges remain due to insufficient training in addressing special education needs and disabilities (SEND), as well as teacher insecurities. Consequently, many students diagnosed with low incidence disabilities are excluded from general education settings (Martin, 2021). While the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) advocates for access to the general education curriculum for all students, there remains ambiguity surrounding the interpretation of "access" (Collins, Hager, & Galloway, 2011). This ambiguity results in numerous students with moderate to severe disabilities, including those with low incidence disabilities, being left out of the general education classroom, thus foregoing the diverse learning opportunities offered by a broader curriculum.

Inclusive classrooms yield benefits for both disabled and non-disabled students. Non-disabled students demonstrate improved attitudes towards their disabled peers, along with increased self-esteem and self-concept, fostering tolerance and appreciation for others. Inclusive

classes also foster sensitivity and reduce fear of human differences, while expanding social networks and friendships (Mu, Siegel, & Allinder, 2000). For students with disabilities, inclusive environments facilitate the acquisition of essential life skills such as communication, motor skills, social skills, and independence. Additionally, they learn to navigate social interactions and develop friendships (Mu, Siegel, & Allinder, 2000). Specifically, practical arts education, including food preparation skills, dietary knowledge, cooking confidence, and attitudes toward food and cooking, promotes independence (Hersch et al., 2014; Tabr-Doughty et al., 2011).

Inclusive Classrooms and Independence

Inclusion is indispensable in education, transcending contexts, individual characteristics, circumstances, and potential challenges during schooling. It underscores the need for tailored education that considers each student's unique needs and fosters collaborative, multidimensional efforts among educators. Teaching and learning processes should be universally applied, free from discrimination, and centered on individuality, tolerance, and freedom, catering to each student's characteristics and potential. Such an approach facilitates the holistic development of each individual's personality, instilling values, habits, and attitudes beneficial to all. Inclusion is foundational to a contemporary educational system, where schools serve as integrative spaces that offer diverse experiences and uphold equity and inclusion as guiding principles for all students (Garcia-Perales, et al., 2022).

However, some students with distinct educational needs require specialized support to ensure an inclusive learning environment. Despite legal mandates stipulating access to the general education curriculum for all students (Collins, Hager & Galloway, 2011), these students are often unable to participate in general education classrooms.

When students with disabilities are excluded from general education classrooms and do not have the opportunity to learn from the general education curriculum, they are deprived of valuable opportunities to develop and maintain essential social skills. Inclusive classrooms provide an environment where students can cultivate literacy, communication, and social abilities, fostering meaningful relationships and friendships, all of which are crucial for independence and success in life (SMU Denver, 2023). Without access to inclusive education, students may lack the necessary skills to navigate adulthood independently, potentially leading to long-term deficits in their ability to thrive.

Furthermore, the absence of inclusive education experiences may contribute to heightened stress levels and poor mental health outcomes, including symptoms of depression. Research by Park (2020) indicates that economic status plays a significant role in this dynamic, with limited access to education exacerbating depressive symptoms. Additionally, Park suggests a cyclical pattern where economic status and depressive symptoms impact future generations, perpetuating the cycle of low socioeconomic status and poor mental health outcomes (Park, 2020). Breaking this cycle necessitates providing children with access to education that equips them with the skills essential for independence, self-improvement, and well-being.

Organizational Context/Conceptual Framework

In the initial stages of education, students with special needs were frequently marginalized or placed in separate classrooms, away from the mainstream educational setting. However, there has been a noticeable shift in recent times, with students of diverse abilities now integrated and actively engaged in school activities. "In some countries, such as many in Europe as well as the United States, inclusion in education is still perceived primarily as a strategy for serving children with disabilities within general education settings. However, on an international

scale, it is increasingly recognized as a broader reform that addresses the diversity of all learners" (Ainscow and Messiou, 2018, p 2). Despite this advancement, concerns regarding inclusion persist and may be raised by various stakeholders, including the public, students, educators, and parents. These concerns can span political, economic, social, and ethical realms, underscoring the multifaceted nature of inclusive education.

Teachers express concerns about their lack of training to effectively manage inclusive classrooms that include students diagnosed with low incidence disabilities. Many feel ill-equipped to address the individual needs outlined in students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) while also catering to the general population of the classroom. Additionally, there's a perception among some teachers that students with low incidence disabilities face social acceptance issues from their peers in mainstream classrooms, leading to a sense of division within the classroom environment. Moreover, concerns are raised about the inadequate support staff and limited resources, resulting in an increased workload and potential burnout (Forlin and Chambers, 2010).

Parents voice apprehensions about their children being labeled, potential peer rejection, and insufficient support in the classroom. Students themselves are worried about larger class sizes, receiving less individual attention, feeling overlooked, and not being sufficiently challenged. On a broader scale, community concerns revolve around the lack of proper infrastructure, limited parental and community involvement, accountability issues, and the awareness and attitudes of both students and staff. Despite these challenges, the focus remains on delivering a child-centered, relevant curriculum that embraces the unique characteristics of each student, while fostering collaboration and consultation with parents and peers (Wahl, Trauntsching, Hoffman, and Schwab, 2022).

Existing Research

When it comes to inclusion, one of the primary challenges faced by students with special needs is the ambiguity surrounding where they should receive access to the general education curriculum. While the law mandates that students with special needs must have access to this curriculum, it does not specify the setting in which this access should occur, leaving decision-making up to individual schools (IDEA, 2019). This lack of clarity creates a gray area in implementation.

In the context of this study, I transitioned to teaching at a new school after nine years as a special educator. In my new role, I teach 10th-12th grade Family Consumer Science (FCS) classes, specifically focusing on cooking. Despite having students with certain disabilities in my classes, I observed that none of the students from the life skills classroom, who are classified as having low incidence disabilities, were included. Recognizing the myriad benefits of cooking, which extends beyond culinary skills to encompass math, reading, geography, and social skills, I collaborated with the life skills teacher to facilitate the inclusion of these students in the cooking lab sessions. This collaborative effort aimed to provide meaningful opportunities for the life skills students to learn how to cook alongside their general education peers.

Government mandates specified in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) emphasize the necessity of providing all students with access to the general education curriculum. However, a significant query arises concerning the optimal placement for students diagnosed with low incidence disabilities. Should they integrate with their peers in general education classrooms, or would they derive greater benefits from placement in special education settings? Many educators advocate for the latter option, citing its capacity to accommodate a

more tailored learning pace aligned with each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), and IDEA requirements.

Students in life skills classrooms necessitate instruction encompassing both academic and functional content. A study by Collins, Hager, and Galloway found that concurrent instruction in academic and functional content resulted in improved retention of concepts (Collins, Hager, & Galloway, 2011). Similarly, this study aims to integrate academic and functional content through cooking instruction, aiming to enhance student independence.

Inclusion might not be beneficial for all students with low incidence disabilities in academic classes, but practical arts classes are different. In practical arts classes students, both with and without disabilities are benefitted. Students learn how to appreciate others while building tolerance. They have the ability to learn self-concept while gaining self-esteem. They have the ability to decrease fears of human differences while learning how to be sensitive all while gaining friendships and expanding their social network. When students who are not diagnosed with a disability work with students who are diagnosed with a disability they become peer supports, which in turn increases the academic performance of students diagnosed with disabilities and increases the positive outlook of students without disabilities.

In a study by Mu, Siegel, and Allinder, results revealed that students diagnosed with low incidence disabilities typically do not initiate conversations with others. However, when a student without a disability initiates a conversation with a student with a disability the later responds and interacts in a positive way. Although, there is a possibility of interactions to happen in a natural setting, it is more beneficial for students to be placed in a controlled environment to help facilitate the social interactions which will encourage social relationships (Mu, Siegel, & Allinder, 2020).

Practical arts classes host an inviting classroom setting where students are not always sitting down to hear a lecture. They are typically hands on classes where something is being designed, built or created. The communication in practical arts classes that happen between all students is meaningful and essential to not only cover the functional concepts taught in class but also the academic concept as well as social skills.

Research Problem/Significance of Study

This study holds significant value in highlighting the necessity of inclusive education for students with low incidence disabilities. By investigating the effects of inclusive cooking classes, the research aims to provide meaningful insights into how such initiatives can promote independence among students with disabilities.

Delimitations

Home Economics, once a staple of education in the 1960s, focused on teaching domestic skills to primarily female students. Fast forward to today, and the curriculum has evolved into Family Consumer Science, encompassing essential life skills for all genders, notably cooking and household management. With rising concerns about youth obesity and fast-food reliance, the need for practical cooking skills and healthy living education is more crucial than ever (Lichtenstein, Ludwig, 2010).

Despite legislative mandates advocating for equal access to education, students with low incidence disabilities often find themselves marginalized, particularly in life skills classrooms. This study aims to address this disparity by focusing on inclusive practices within Family Consumer Science. I chose to study students in life skills classrooms due to their often limited access to the general education curriculum. By highlighting the importance of inclusive education, especially in practical arts settings, this study aims to inspire positive change within

school districts. In Family Consumer Science classes, both general education and low incidence disability students have valuable learning opportunities. While general education students gain insights into global issues and cultural appreciation, (Weiner, 2010) low incidence disability students learn essential life skills like cooking and nutrition.

Summary

The study examines the impact of inclusive cooking education on students with low incidence disabilities, who often face challenges related to visual, hearing, or cognitive impairments. These students are typically placed in life skills classrooms and require specialized support for their education. Using a changing-criterion, single-subject design methodology, the study aims to explore how practical arts education, particularly culinary skills, can enhance student independence by integrating academic and functional content. The study endeavors to clarify the uncertainty regarding the integration of students with low incidence disabilities into general education classrooms and advocates for inclusive practices that are beneficial for all students. Furthermore, it aims to highlight the significance of practical arts education in nurturing social interactions, independence, and fundamental life skills among students with disabilities.

Despite legislative mandates advocating for equal access to education, students with low incidence disabilities often find themselves marginalized, particularly in life skills classrooms. This research seeks to address this disparity by emphasizing the importance of inclusive education, especially in practical arts settings. Through collaboration and meaningful learning experiences, both general education and low incidence disability students can benefit from Family Consumer Science classes, with general education students gaining insights into global

issues and cultural appreciation, while low incidence disability students learn essential life skills like cooking and nutrition.

Definition of Terms

Academic Content – having no practical or useful significance, conforming to the traditions or rules of a school (Merriam-Webster, 2023)

Functional Content - means nonacademic, as in “routine activities of everyday living”. Teaching children how to “function” in the world is just as important as teaching academic skills (Kelleher, Watterson, & Rogers, 2021).

Inclusive Classroom - is the placement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms (Szumski, Smorgorzewska, & Grygiel, 2022).

Life Skills Classroom- Direct instructional programs designed to meet the needs of students whose primary focus is on the development of independent living skills (NEIU19, 2023).

Low Incidence Disabilities –A person who has been diagnosed with visual or hearing impaired, or simultaneous visual and hearing impairments; a significant cognitive impairment; or any impairment for which a small number of personnel with highly specialized skills and knowledge are needed in order for children with that impairment to receive early intervention services or a free appropriate public education (IDEA, 2019).

Moderate to Severe Disabilities – A person who has an IQ of 20-49 and displays impaired reasoning, problem-solving, memory, thinking, communication, self-care and other skills needed to function in society. Typically diagnosed as autism, deaf/blindness, and developmental delays that impair speech and motor skills (Kumar, 2022).

Practical Arts – an art (such as woodworking or cooking) that serves ordinary or material needs (Merriam-Webster, 2023)

SEND – Special Education Needs & Disabilities (Boroson, 2017)

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Art, with its diverse mediums and practices, serves as a boundless realm of creativity, fostering individual expression and social development. Practical arts, spanning from woodworking to culinary arts, offer avenues for exploration and growth. In their illuminating study, Engelmann, Kappel, and Kerry-Moran (2018) delve into the transformative journey of integrating art into early childhood and special education. Through an artist residency program, they demonstrate the profound impact of immersing preservice teachers in the vibrant world of art, guiding them into realms of creativity and innovation.

This integration of art into education underscores its potential to enrich learning experiences and cultivate a deeper appreciation for expression. Much like a painter blends colors on canvas, educators can infuse kitchen classes with a variety of tastes and textures, transforming them into engaging culinary adventures. Just as artists experiment with methods and materials, students explore the artistry of culinary craftsmanship, fostering independence as they become proficient through practice (Engelmann, Kappel, & Kerry-Moran, 2018). This journey of exploration nurtures autonomy and reduces the need for assistance over time.

Furthermore, research suggests that cooking education can have far-reaching benefits. Studies by Evans et al. (2018) and Vaughan et al. (2024) indicate that such education enhances dietary habits and life skills among students. Collaborative planning with community organizations like 4-H clubs, as highlighted by Meng (2020), facilitates the delivery of inclusive cooking programs. Additionally, Mechling et al. (2013) and Taber-Doughty et al. (2011) have shown the effectiveness of video modeling and peer support strategies in teaching cooking skills to students with disabilities.

The integration of practical arts into education not only fosters creativity and innovation but also promotes autonomy and inclusive learning environments. Educators embracing diverse forms of expression can unlock art's transformative potential, enriching the educational journey. Collaborative efforts and evidence-based strategies in cooking education empower students with essential life skills, promoting independence and well-being (Boati, 2018).

Theoretical Frameworks

When exploring education and human development, significant theories such as Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), and the Social Model of Disability (SMD) offer valuable perspectives. These theories, grounded in research and scholarly discussion, illuminate motivation, learning, and attitudes towards disability. Self-Determination Theory highlights autonomy and competence as drivers of motivation, Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes experiential learning stages, and the Social Model of Disability challenges conventional views on disability by emphasizing societal barriers.

Self-Determination Theory

Increasing evidence indicates that self-determination plays a significant role in shaping the educational and transitional paths of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Wehmeyer, 2007). Educators use diverse teaching techniques, such as decision-making, problem-solving, choice-making, goal-setting, self-advocacy, and self-regulated learning, to impart the skills of self-determination. These strategies, underpinned by theory and research, have proven effective in increasing students' engagement in educational planning and supporting their attainment of objectives across academic, vocational, and community contexts (Wehmeyer, 2007). Self-determination theory emphasizes the importance of valuing the quality of motivation

over its quantity, advocating for intrinsic motivation rooted in personal meaning and interest rather than relying on external pressures and rewards.

Environments that foster feelings of competence, autonomy, and connection among peers are conducive to cultivating the desired motivation, goals, and work values (Gagne, 2014). The Oxford Handbook of Work Motivation, Engagement, and Self-Determination Theory aims to inspire both researchers and practitioners by providing insights for future research utilizing self-determination theory and practical guidance for adapting programs and practices based on its principles.

Experiential Learning Theory

David A. Kolb outlines the experiential learning process with dual objectives: understanding a specific subject matter and gaining insight into one's learning journey. This process unfolds in four stages, beginning with experiencing, where learners engage their senses to immerse themselves in the present encounter. Following this, reflection occurs, prompting individuals to contemplate the experience and connect emotions with thoughts about the event. Subsequently, in the thinking phase, learners engage in cognitive processes to draw conclusions and develop theories or principles for testing. Finally, acting involves putting theories into practice, applying newfound knowledge to receive feedback and shape subsequent experiences. As people participate in this repetitive process, they refine their understanding of the subject matter and how they learn (Kolb, 2001).

David Kolb's model of experiential learning outlines a structured approach with four consecutive stages. The process initiates with experiencing, where learners actively engage their senses to comprehend the immediate situation. Following this, reflection ensues, encouraging individuals to introspect and consolidate their thoughts and feelings about the encountered

experience. Next, the thinking phase involves cognitive engagement to derive conclusions and formulate theories or principles. Finally, acting involves applying these theories in practical settings to gain feedback and iterate upon the learning process (Kolb, 2001). This cyclic progression not only enhances subject matter comprehension but also fosters self-awareness and adaptability in learning methodologies.

Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability is rooted in the core tenets of disability, asserting that it is the result of societal norms and structures rather than inherent limitations. According to Adam and Koutsoklenis, disability arises from the disadvantage or restriction of activity imposed by the political, economic, and cultural norms of a society that fails to accommodate individuals with impairments, consequently marginalizing them from mainstream activities. In this view, disability parallels forms of discrimination such as racism or sexism, representing a manifestation of social oppression and systemic exclusion (Adam & Koutsoklenis, 2023).

The "social model of disability," conceived by disability rights advocates in the 1970s and 1980s, posits that societal inclusivity and accessibility for individuals with disabilities would eliminate their participation limitations. Buser and Perry (2023) assert that how individuals with disabilities choose to perceive or discuss their impairments is a personal choice, whether aligned with the medical or social model of disability. However, until researchers thoroughly examine and address societal responses to individuals with disabilities, including the impact of public perceptions, barriers to full inclusion will persist (Buser & Perry, 2023).

Recognizing that barriers to inclusivity extend beyond physical obstacles to include deeply ingrained societal attitudes and beliefs is essential. Only by embracing this perspective can society begin to reshape perceptions and confront the widespread stigmatization of disabled

individuals. Integrating all students into mainstream education can serve as a catalyst for societal change, fostering a perspective that views everyone as individuals rather than defining them by their disabilities (Buser & Perry, 2023).

The Social Model of Disability asserts that disability stems from societal norms and structures rather than inherent limitations, according to Adam and Koutsoklenis. Disability results from societal disadvantage or activity restrictions imposed by political, economic, and cultural norms that fail to accommodate individuals with impairments, thereby marginalizing them from mainstream activities. In this view, disability parallels discrimination such as racism or sexism, signifying social oppression and systemic exclusion (Adam & Koutsoklenis, 2023). By addressing responses to disabilities, society can work towards dismantling these barriers and fostering a more inclusive society. This shift begins with initiatives like integrating all students into mainstream education, initiating a societal transformation towards recognizing individuals beyond their disabilities (Adam & Koutsoklenis, 2023 and Buser & Perry, 2023).

Inclusive Education and Cooking: Trends and Challenges

Students with intellectual disabilities face numerous challenges in their education, including difficulty understanding concepts, retaining information, and staying focused (Collins, Hager, and Galloway, 2011). The absence of tailored curricula heightens these difficulties, leading to lower employment rates, decreased independence, and limited opportunities for post-secondary education (MSUDenver, 2023). Therefore, integrating elements of functional curriculum, such as practical arts courses, is essential to support the comprehensive growth and self-reliance of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Inclusive education has gained momentum in recent years, emphasizing the importance of accommodating students with disabilities within mainstream classrooms (Adam & Koutsoklenis, 2023; MSUDenver, 2023).

Research demonstrates that inclusive practices significantly benefit students' academic performance and social integration (Szumski et al., 2022; Wahl et al., 2022). Cooking education, as evidenced by studies such as those by Bonati (2018) and Hansen et al. (2019), has become a favored approach for fostering inclusion by providing students with practical learning opportunities.

Educators are increasingly using technology to help students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities learn and use skills (Taber-Doughty et al. (2011). Research by Taber-Doughty et al. (2011) shows how video modeling can teach cooking skills to students with mild intellectual disabilities, highlighting the need to improve strategies for functional skills training. By using technology and proven methods, educators can make education more effective and inclusive for students with diverse learning needs (Taber-Doughty et al., 2011). Cooking classes provide a hands-on way to connect what students learn in theory to real-life situations (Bonati, 2018; Hansen et al., 2019). For instance, cooking math makes abstract mathematical principles tangible and relevant to daily life. Additionally, cooking integrates academic subjects such as science, reading, and social studies, demonstrating their practical significance. This interdisciplinary approach not only enhances understanding but also promotes independence by equipping individuals with essential life skills (Bonati, 2018; Hansen et al., 2019).

Special education and practical arts teachers collaborate to provide additional support to students with disabilities, ensuring inclusive education. Studies like Collins, Hager, and Galloway (2011) demonstrate the effectiveness of teaching core and functional content together, reinforcing students' knowledge and retention. Through this dynamic partnership, classrooms become inclusive environments where social skills are seamlessly integrated into the educational framework (Collins, Hager, and Galloway, 2011). The transformative power of inclusion extends

beyond individual growth, reshaping attitudes and fostering deeper connections among peers (Szumski et al., 2022). In inclusive settings, friendships flourish, and social circles expand, enriching the educational experience for all involved (Wahl et al., 2022). Cooking classes exemplify inclusive environments, fostering collaboration and mutual learning experiences among students.

Effectiveness of Inclusive Cooking Education: Findings and Applications

Implementing inclusive cooking education programs faces ongoing challenges, despite progress in educational practices (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). One major hurdle is the insufficient training and support available to teachers, leaving them ill-equipped to address the diverse needs of their students (Giri et al., 2022). Moreover, while cooking classes offer valuable hands-on learning experiences, concerns persist regarding their accessibility for students with disabilities (Hasan et al., 2019).

Food holds a unique power beyond mere sustenance; it serves as a compelling motivator for learning (Chakraborty & Stone, 2009). Cooking classes have been found to engage students effectively, leading to higher levels of participation and attendance. When incorporated into the curriculum, cooking provides hands-on learning experiences that go beyond traditional classroom boundaries, helping students develop important life skills. Culinary activities can serve as more than just engaging exercises; they can also promote healthier dietary habits among students. Actively involving students in cooking not only sparks their interest but also fosters independence as they acquire essential skills (Chakraborty & Stone, 2009).

Building on this idea, exposing students to a variety of cuisines can enrich their educational journey. Exploring foods from different cultures can pique curiosity in subjects like social studies, prompting students to learn about the traditions and origins behind various

culinary practices (Collins, Hager, & Galloway, 2011). This exploration not only enhances their understanding of geography and agriculture but also fosters an appreciation for cultural diversity (Meng, 2020). Just as different ingredients combine to create a dish, various academic subjects work together to support the development of culinary skills (Chakraborty & Stone, 2009). Subjects such as social studies, math, science, and reading provide the fundamental knowledge needed to master cooking techniques, ultimately improving students' ability to become independent in their culinary pursuits (Collins, Hager, & Galloway, 2011).

Implications for Practice: Promoting Inclusion in Educational Settings

In the vibrant kitchen, where pots bubble and spices swirl, children don't just prepare tasty dishes; they also absorb important lessons in nutrition, geography, and various subjects, akin to the key ingredients in a recipe for culinary success (Collins, Hager, & Galloway, 2011). Cooking serves as a deliciously interactive classroom, where children apply their knowledge to the real world with each chop and stir. Even the seemingly mundane tasks of meal preparation or snack-making blossom into dynamic learning adventures, incorporating elements of math, reading, and science into the culinary journey. From measuring ingredients to exploring the science behind cooking reactions, every moment spent in the kitchen presents a plethora of educational possibilities (Lichtenstein, & Ludwig, 2010).

Cooking transcends academic subjects, inviting students to explore social studies as they discover the cultural origins of different dishes or to express their creativity through art and music as they plate their culinary creations (Weiner, 2010). In this deliciously educational journey, active and meaningful family participation adds an extra layer of flavor (Newman, 1994). As parents and children come together in the kitchen, they not only bond over shared experiences but also reinforce the principles of developmentally appropriate education outlined

by the Texas Education Agency in 1994 (Newman, 1994). Through these cooking-related activities, the bridge between home and school grows stronger, creating a seamless continuum of learning that nourishes both mind and body (Newman, 1994). Research suggests that cooking education can enhance dietary habits and life skills among students (Evans et al., 2018; Vaughan et al., 2024). Collaborative planning and partnerships with community organizations, such as 4-H clubs, facilitate the delivery of inclusive cooking programs (Meng, 2020). Moreover, video modeling and peer support strategies have shown promise in teaching cooking skills to students with disabilities (Mechling et al., 2013; Taber-Doughty et al., 2011).

In the dynamic classroom environment, inclusive practices take center stage. Mu, Siegel, and Allinder (2000) highlight the importance of peer interactions in fostering social skills and acceptance among students with disabilities. Cooking classes, with their collaborative nature, provide fertile ground for meaningful interactions, promoting genuine friendships and mutual learning (Mu, Siegel, & Allinder, 2000). Additionally, special education and practical arts teachers often find themselves needing to provide additional direct instruction to students who may require extra support beyond what is received in the general education setting (Forlin & Chambers 2011). This could involve offering extended time or one-on-one instruction to help students master specific skills. Inclusive general education classes should integrate content from core subjects such as math, science, social studies, and language arts. By teaching these subjects in conjunction, students can better understand how each relates to the other, reinforcing their knowledge and enhancing their ability to retain information (Forlin & Chambers 2011).

Future Directions: Areas for Further Research and Development

In the collaborative partnership between special education and general education teachers, the classroom undergoes a transformation, becoming a vibrant environment where

social skills seamlessly intertwine with the educational framework (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). . Like skilled artisans, educators meticulously tailor the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of each student, fostering inclusivity and active engagement (Mu, Siegel, & Allinder, 2000). As students with disabilities take on active roles, they embrace participation in school activities, refining crucial communication, motor, and social skills along the way. Through meaningful interactions, they navigate the intricate dynamics of social interaction, preparing themselves for life beyond the classroom (Mu, Siegel, & Allinder, 2000).

However, the impact of inclusion extends far beyond individual growth. It reshapes attitudes and nurtures deeper connections among peers, fostering a culture of acceptance and empathy (Mu, Siegel, & Allinder, 2000). In this collaborative learning journey, friendships flourish, and social circles expand, enriching the educational experience for all involved. Indeed, in the symphony of inclusive education, each element contributes to a harmonious melody of progress and understanding, showcasing the profound impact of collective learning on the path to shared success (Mu, Siegel, & Allinder, 2000).

Cooking classes epitomize inclusive settings due to their interactive nature, often involving small groups working collaboratively (Borosan, 2017). In such environments, educators can step back, allowing students to engage with one another, fostering genuine friendships and mutual learning experiences (Mu, Siegel, & Allinder, 2000). As researchers navigate the educational landscape, inclusive practices emerge as the bedrock of progress (Borosan, 2017). Borosan (2017) underscores the importance of further research to refine inclusive strategies and address existing challenges. Utilizing theoretical frameworks such as the social model of disability, educators can craft inclusive learning environments that address a range of needs, fostering a pathway towards greater equity in education (Borosan, 2017).

There is a pressing need for additional research to delve into the enduring impacts of inclusive cooking education on students' independence and employment prospects (García-Perales et al., 2022).

Additionally, examining the effectiveness of different instructional approaches and the impact of cooking education on students with varying disabilities can inform the development of more inclusive practices (Rasmitadila et al., 2021; Boroson, 2017). Recognizing that hurdles to inclusivity go beyond physical limitations to encompass entrenched societal attitudes and beliefs is essential (Kolb et al., 2001). Embracing this viewpoint marks the initial stride towards reshaping societal outlooks and combatting the widespread stigma experienced by those with disabilities. The integration of all students into mainstream education holds the potential to catalyze societal transformation, nurturing a perspective that appreciates individuals for their inherent worth rather than reducing them to their disabilities (Kolb et al., 2001).

Summary

Practical arts education offers a dynamic platform for fostering autonomy and inclusive learning environments. Engelmann, Kappel, and Kerry-Moran (2018) demonstrate the transformative potential of integrating art into education through an artist residency program, showcasing how educators can immerse students in creative realms to nurture innovation and self-expression. The integration of practical arts, such as culinary education, not only enriches learning experiences but also promotes independence among students. Studies by Evans et al. (2018) and Vaughan et al. (2024) highlight the positive impact of cooking education on dietary habits and life skills, underscoring the importance of collaborative planning with community organizations like 4-H clubs, as outlined by Meng (2020). Moreover, Mechling et al. (2013) and Taber-Doughty et al. (2011) demonstrate the effectiveness of video modeling and peer support

strategies in teaching cooking skills to students with disabilities, emphasizing the need for evidence-based approaches to enhance inclusivity.

Inclusive education, guided by theoretical frameworks like Self-Determination Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, and the Social Model of Disability, fosters holistic development and challenges societal norms. Self-Determination Theory, championed by Wehmeyer (2007), emphasizes autonomy and competence as drivers of motivation, advocating for intrinsic motivation rooted in personal meaning. Experiential Learning Theory, articulated by Kolb (2001), proposes a methodical learning approach involving experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. Adam and Koutsoklenis (2023) discuss the Social Model of Disability, which suggests that disability stems from societal structures rather than inherent limitations, highlighting the significance of inclusivity and accessibility.

Overall, the integration of practical arts and inclusive practices in education promotes autonomy, fosters inclusive learning environments, and challenges societal norms, paving the way for a more equitable future. Further research is necessary to explore the long-term impacts of inclusive education and cooking programs on students' independence and employment outcomes, as well as to refine instructional approaches and address the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Recognizing and addressing societal barriers to inclusivity is crucial for fostering a perspective that values individuals for their inherent worth and abilities, rather than defining them by their disabilities.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Observations and comparisons between different school districts concluded the need for more inclusive classes within the practical arts department even though districts do not budget for the inclusion of students. This chapter focuses on outlining the study's framework within the context of a small public school situated in a Mid-Atlantic state. The aim of this study's research is to identify the growing independence of students diagnosed with low incidence disabilities and their capacity to facilitate the transition to adulthood.

Research Design

This study, employing a quantitative, changing-criterion, single-subject design, enabled me to utilize the students' advancements as a basis for comparing their proficiency in various areas such as food preparation, kitchen safety, cooking skills (following a recipe, locating, and measuring ingredients), dining etiquette, and cleanup. I investigated the relationship between cooking skills demonstrated on day one and day 15 following nine weeks of instruction. The rationale behind this choice stems from the prevalent absence of life skills integrated into general education curriculum. If correlations between the data points reveal enhanced independence, it could pave the way for more inclusive classroom practices.

Action Plan: Intervention

Students who have been diagnosed with low incidence disabilities received cooking lessons from the researcher. The researcher taught a lesson about a cooking tool and then participants used that tool to cook a dish in the cooking lab following a recipe. Students gathered the ingredients and utensils needed and then created the recipe. Participants learned about specific tools and how to use them correctly all while making something to eat.

Setting of Study: Demographics of School District

The participating school is a small public school located in a Mid-Atlantic state consisting of one high school, one middle school, one intermediate school, and one elementary school. The district encompasses 3 boroughs and covers approximately 52 square miles; 18,437 people reside within its boundaries of which 2,400 are students. The participants of this study were from the high school Life Skills classroom (grades 9-12) and included 11 students, 1 teacher, 1 paraprofessional, and 1 student aid. The participants partnered up with general education students from the Farm to Table class which is comprised of 19 students and 1 teacher. Inside the high school sits a newly renovated cooking laboratory that the participants will use.

Immediately next door is the Life Skills classroom. Cooking lessons were held in the Life Skills classroom while the actual cooking was held in the cooking lab. The cooking lab had 5 kitchenette stations with counter space, a sink, a four burner stove top with an electric oven, and a microwave. All kitchenettes were supplied with the same cooking and eating utensils that one would find in a typical home. The life skills classroom was made up of two sections, half of the room were desks for each student and the other half of the room was a kitchenette with a washer and dryer.

Participants

The sample was drawn from a population of high school students who were placed into the life skills classroom. These students were first year students and considered freshman. The students were integrated into the general education cooking lab and cooked dishes with the support of second and third year Family Consumer Science students in the Farm to Table program.

Among the pool of six possible participants, an overwhelming majority of five willingly agreed to participate. Within this cohort of five, there were three female participants and two male participants. Notably, each student in this group has been clinically diagnosed with multiple disabilities, underscoring the complex and varied nature of their individual experiences. Importantly, there were no dropouts from the study, ensuring the integrity of the participant pool throughout the research process.

Figure 3.1

Participant Demographics

	Age	Primary Disability	Secondary Disability	Additional Disabilities
Student #1	17	- Intellectual Disability (ID)	- Autism (Pervasive Developmental Disorder)	- Other Health Impairment (OHI) (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: ADHD) - Speech and Language (S&L)
Student #2	14	- Intellectual Disability	- Speech and Language	N/A
Student #3	14	- Multiple Disabilities	- Smith Magenis Syndrome	- ID, S&L, Sleep Disturbance, Behavioral Problems, Distinctive Facial Features
Student #4	18	- Multiple Disabilities	- Down Syndrome	- Speech and Language
Student #5	15	- Autism	- Speech and Language	N/A

Note: Figure 3.1 provides a visual representation of the comparison between participants in this study. It's important to note that this visual was custom-created by the researcher for the purpose of this study.

A coding system was established to track students' progress throughout the study, prioritizing their privacy by avoiding any personal or identifiable information. Students were assigned random numbers to ensure anonymity when sharing results with stakeholders. These

findings were intended for distribution to current and future educators at local, state, and national levels, as appropriate.

Participation Selection Criteria

1. To be eligible for this study students must have been first year students and not have had cooking lessons from the Family Consumer Science teacher (researcher) previously.
2. All participants had to be diagnosed with a low incidence disability and placed into the life skills classroom as deemed necessary by their least restrictive environment. Low incidence disability examples could include, but are not limited to, “a visual or hearing impaired, or simultaneous visual and hearing impairments; a significant cognitive impairment; or any impairment for which a small number of personnel with highly specialized skills and knowledge are needed in order for children with that impairment to receive early intervention services or a free appropriate public education” (IDEA, 2019).

Participant Exclusion Criteria

1. Any high school life skills student who participated in cooking classes in previous years.
2. Any high school student diagnosed without a low incidence disability.
3. Any student without parental permission.

Participant Consent Steps

The high school Family Consumer Science (cooking) teacher, also acting as the researcher, contacted the parents/guardians of incoming new students by phone (refer to Appendix E). The study's objectives were discussed, and any inquiries or concerns were

addressed before obtaining verbal parental consent. It was emphasized that participation in the study was voluntary, and students would receive cooking lessons regardless of their involvement. Parents were assured that their child's results would be included in the study and handled confidentially in publications and presentations.

For parents/guardians who agreed to their student's participation, a consent form (refer to Appendix I) was sent with students on the first day of school to be signed and returned within one week the start of the 2023-2024 school year.

On the second day of the 2023-2024 academic year, the researcher met with the participating students to explain the study's purpose (refer to Appendix F). Students were informed of their option to decline having their data collected and used in the study while still being able to participate in cooking lessons. Due to the students' age and limitations, verbal assent, combined with checking a box indicating their choice (refer to Appendix H), was employed for consent purposes.

Procedures

Recruitment took place in August, two weeks before the start of the 2023-2024 school year, allowing for potential newcomers to the district. The researcher, a high school family consumer science teacher in northeastern Pennsylvania, contacted the parents/guardians of students identified as needing intervention via phone (refer to Appendix E). The purpose of the study was explained to parents, and any questions they had were addressed. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary, and students would still receive hands-on cooking lessons twice a week throughout the school year, regardless of their involvement in the study. Parents were informed that their child's data would be collected for inclusion in the study and shared confidentially in publications and presentations to inform future educational practices. If parents

or guardians agreed to their student's participation, a consent form (see Appendix I) was sent home with the student in a school-addressed envelope for signature and return. Parents/guardians were provided with the researcher's contact information in case of any questions or changes in participation status. Six students were invited to participate, with five completing the nine-week study after obtaining appropriate permissions, while one parent opted out of the study for their child.

At the beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year, the researcher met with students from the life skills classroom to explain the purpose of the "study" (see student assent script and form - Appendix F and Appendix H, respectively). Students were informed that they had the option to decline the researcher's collection or use of their data and scores in the study. It was reiterated that even if they chose not to have their scores used, they would still participate in hands-on cooking lessons. Due to the students' age and limitations, verbal assent, along with checking a box indicating their decision, was utilized by the researcher for assent purposes.

Independence Based Twice-Weekly Assessments

During the initial week, students collaborated with me in the Life Skills room kitchenette to carry out the activities listed in the Food & Eating Skills and Safety Checklist (see Appendix A). A task was read from the checklist, and students were tasked with completing it. If they completed the task independently, the "yes" box was marked; if they required assistance or couldn't complete it, the "no" box was checked. Each student spent about 15 minutes attempting the tasks on the checklist. Cooking lessons began in the second week of the school year after all participants completed the checklist. This checklist helped assess their initial food, eating, and independence skills.

Cooking lessons were split into two parts. I spent 45 minutes in the life skills kitchenette on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:10-1:55, showing students where to find the tools they would be using for the next cooking lesson. Students were asked if they knew the name of the tool and its purpose. After a discussion, the tool was passed around for students to explore. Since the microwave and air fryer were too large to pass around, students were invited up one at a time to explore them. They were given time to ask questions about the tools. After the tool exploration, I demonstrated how to use them. Once they were familiar with the tools, I reviewed the recipe by providing them with a copy to follow while explaining and showing them step by step what to do.

The following day, students entered the cooking lab and were paired with second-year culinary students, their designated buddies. The cooking lab sessions extended for an hour and a half on Tuesdays and Thursdays, running from 9:25 to 10:55. Prior to the commencement of activities, I reiterated the dish they were preparing and highlighted the key tool for the lesson. Emphasizing their role as the head chef, I presented the recipe to the participants and their culinary partners. Each pair received a copy of the recipe and proceeded to their designated kitchenette to begin cooking. I reminded students to adhere to proper hygiene practices by washing their hands before commencing cooking, then encouraged them with a spirited "Go Team Go" to initiate the cooking process.

In instances where a participant overlooked a step, verbal prompts were provided as reminders to complete the task, such as "Wash your hands" or "Retrieve the tool." Each time a prompt was issued, it was recorded on the participant's Cooking Skills Set Assessment sheet (refer to Appendix B). For every two prompts required, two tally marks were added, and so forth, with a maximum of five points allocated if a student needed three or more prompts to complete a

task. Those requiring 1-2 prompts received three points, while those executing tasks without any prompts received one point. At the conclusion of the hour and a half cooking session, the scores were tallied. Students scoring between 37-50 points were categorized as having skills not yet mastered. Those scoring 15-36 points were deemed to be working towards skill mastery, while students scoring between 10 and 14 points were considered to have mastered the skills and achieved independence.

Over the course of nine weeks, students engaged in cooking sessions twice a week. Throughout this period, they concentrated on mastering the use of various kitchen utensils and appliances, including a spatula (turner), can opener, rubber spatula, colander, wooden/stirring spoons, measuring spoons, measuring cups, cutting board and knife, tongs, wire whisk, rolling pin, microwave, hand mixer, air fryer, and pot holder/trivet. The recipes prepared encompassed a diverse array of dishes, ranging from grilled cheese and canned soup to pancakes, pasta with jarred alfredo sauce, macaroni and cheese, muffins, peanut butter protein balls, caprese salad, apple pie bites, breakfast burrito, sugar cut-out cookies, ramen, cake mix bars, chicken nuggets with fries, and pumpkin or apple dump cake, respectively.

At the culmination of the cooking lab sessions, I convened with the students for a final meeting. During this session, they were tasked once more with demonstrating their proficiency in the activities outlined in the Food & Eating Skills and Safety Checklist (see Appendix A). A "yes" box was marked if they could independently execute the task, while a "no" indicated their need for assistance or inability to complete the task. Each student allocated approximately 10 minutes to complete the checklist tasks, thus concluding their culinary training program.

Timeline and Scheduling

The Intervention Cooking Lab schedule depicted in Figure 3.1 illustrates the weekly plan utilized throughout the nine-week intervention period. Given that the district had five full weeks of school (with 5 school days each week) and one week with four days due to the observance of Columbus Day, student participation remained consistent each day and week. Cooking labs were conducted twice weekly, specifically on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during the second block of the day. The intervention commenced in the first full week of September and concluded in the last full week of October 2023.

Students were actively engaged in cooking labs for ninety minutes on the scheduled days. The researcher oversaw the classroom to ensure adherence to safety best practices during cooking labs. In instances where a student became off-task, redirection was provided, accompanied by recognition for diligent effort and a tally mark recorded on their Cooking Skills Assessment sheet (see Appendix B). Restroom breaks were accommodated upon request.

Figure 3.2

Intervention Cooking Lab Schedule

Date of Lesson	Item Made	Notes:
9/5	Grilled Cheese	
9/7	Canned Soup	
9/12	Pancakes	
9/14	Pasta with Alfredo	
9/19	Macaroni and Cheese	
9/21	Muffins	
9/26	Peanut Butter Protein	
9/28	Caprese Salad	
10/3	Apple Pie Bites	
10/5	Breakfast Burrito	
10/10	Sugar Cookie Cutouts	
10/12	Ramen	
10/17	Cake Mix Bars	
10/19	Chicken Nuggets / Fries	
10/24	Dump Cake	

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection methods comprised the following:

1. Food Skills and Safety Checklist: Administered individually at the study's outset, this checklist involved the researcher and participants working one-on-one to assess their abilities. Participants were tasked with demonstrating specific tasks, with responses categorized as either "yes" (indicating independent completion) or "no" (indicating need for assistance). The same checklist was completed after participants had undergone fifteen cooking lessons and labs, serving as both pre and posttests.
2. Observational Assessment: Participants cooked while the researcher observed, making tally marks each time a participant required a prompt to execute a skill accurately.

Prompts were communicated through verbal commands, guiding individuals on specific actions to perform. Examples of prompts include "Please wash your hands" or "Remember to use oven mitts." Participants were scored based on the number of prompts needed per skill: 5 points for 3 or more prompts, 3 points for 1-2 prompts, and 1 point for no prompts required. At the conclusion of each cooking lab, these scores were tallied to determine a master score. Participants scoring between 37 and 50 points were classified as "Skills Not Mastered," those scoring between 15 and 36 as "Working on Skill Mastery," and those scoring between 10 and 14 as "Skills Mastered." Final scores were plotted on a graph for analysis.

Data Analysis

When analyzing data for the Food Skills and Safety Checklist, as detailed in Appendix A, results will be reported as both pre-test and post-test scores. Participants will be assessed based on their ability to complete tasks, which will be documented for each skill set group. Each task completed will earn a score of 1 point (yes) or 0 points (no). The total yes scores will then be divided by the total possible scores in the set to calculate a percentage. For example, if a participant scores 6 yes points out of a total of 10 possible points, their score would be 60%. The researcher sought to observe an increase in the percentage to consider the intervention successful for each skill set.

The skill sets to be scored include Food Preparation, Safety, Eating, Clean-Up, and Manners. Each skill set comprises specific tasks, such as storing food appropriately, using kitchen appliances safely, practicing portion control, and demonstrating good table manners.

Data from the Cooking Skill Set Assessment, outlined in Appendix B, were used to plot data points on participants' graphs. Each cooking lab session represented a specific data point.

Participants were observed during their cooking sessions, and their progress was recorded by tallying the number of prompts needed to complete tasks. At the end of each session, tallies were totaled, and participants were awarded points based on the prompts needed: 5 points for three or more prompts, 3 points for one to two prompts, and 1 point for no prompts needed. The total points earned were then plotted on the graph. Success in the study was indicated by an upward trend line on the graph, showing increased independence over time.

This study employed a changing-criterion, single-subject design method to thoroughly comprehend individual variability. Changing-criterion, single-subject research design is suitable for studying the time course, variability, or effect of an intervention (Janosky, 2005). Visual inspection of a trend line was utilized, incorporating both magnitude and rate of changes. Magnitude was determined by the level or total score of the Cooking Skill Set Assessment, while rate was indicated by the trend observed. On the graph, the x-axis represented each cooking lab session, while the y-axis depicted the total points scored on the Cooking Skill Set Assessment. The scale on the y-axis ranged from 50 at the bottom to 10 at the top, with data points plotted above the corresponding cooking lab date. Success in the study was determined by an upward trend line indicating increased independence over time.

Presentation of Results

In this particular school district, the study's outcomes were prepared to be shared with students and their families, alongside administration and the special education supervisor. This sharing aimed to support educational decision-making for future initiatives and to advocate for best practices within the district.

Permissions and Protections

To ensure the safety and well-being of the participating students, initial consent was obtained from both parents and students. The researcher maintained open communication with parents and guardians throughout the study to address any questions or concerns and to confirm ongoing participation. Importantly, no physical harm was posed to any student during the study. All scheduled students actively participated in the cooking lab within the designated timeframe and daily schedule, receiving necessary instructions. The study encompassed students from diverse backgrounds, including various genders, ethnicities, financial demographics, age groups, and ability levels, ensuring comprehensive assessment and representation across these criteria.

To guarantee maximum confidentiality and security for participant data in my research, I have adopted stringent safeguarding measures. The protection of participant information is managed through two main channels: physical and digital security. Physically, all printed materials containing sensitive data are securely stored within a numerically locked safe. This safe is accessible only to authorized researchers, ensuring that physical copies of participant data are protected against unauthorized access. Electronically, participant information is kept on a computer that is locked with a complex password. This layer of security prevents unwanted access, ensuring the data remains confidential and intact. Such precautions reflect my commitment to protecting participant privacy and upholding strict data security standards.

Study Approval

Approval for the study was obtained from both the building administration (Appendix D) and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Slippery Rock University prior to its commencement (Appendix G). This meticulous process was essential to uphold the study's

ethical standards, ensure compliance with university research guidelines, and safeguard the participants, including obtaining informed consent.

Furthermore, in line with the requirements of Slippery Rock University's Ed.D. of Special Education program, the researcher completed various courses focusing on research methodology before initiating the study. Additionally, the researcher completed the CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) Human Subjects Research training (Appendix C) and acquired certification in the Exempt Research Category (Appendix J). These efforts underscored the researcher's dedication to conducting the study ethically and adhering to established protocols.

Additionally, electronic permission was granted by A Love for Special Learning for the researcher to utilize the Food and Safety Checklist as well as the Cooking Skill Set Assessment.

Informed Consent

Before extending formal invitations to participate, the researcher contacted the parents of potential participants via phone calls in August 2023 to discuss the study's purpose and rationale. The script used for parental contact during this period is detailed in Appendix E. Subsequently, the participation paperwork (Appendix H), including the participation permission form, was sent to potential participants. Participants were assured of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time without facing consequences. Full disclosure of the study's procedures and associated risks was provided to all participants before their agreement to participate, encompassing both parental and student consent. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary.

The documentation provided extensive information regarding the research, covering its scope, objectives, duration, methodologies, potential risks or discomforts, advantages, alternative approaches, confidentiality measures, and contact details for the university, staff, and researcher.

Notably, prior to the study's commencement, one parent declined participation for their child. As a result, data was not collected for that student, and they are not included in this study.

Bias Mitigation, Risks, and Discomforts

To counteract researcher confirmation bias, the researcher consistently reassessed their impressions of participants and future readers, actively challenging any pre-existing assumptions and hypotheses. Similarly, social desirability bias was addressed by clarifying to participants and their parents that there would be no consequences or rewards for taking part in the study. The incorporation of cooking lessons and lab activities aligned with the standard high school curriculum, ensuring consistency. Permission to participate offered the sole advantage of documenting and sharing progress and outcomes with future educators.

Unconditional positive regard was emphasized by reassuring participants that declining study participation would not result in any negative consequences, promoting social acceptance. Cultural and gender biases were minimized by inclusively enrolling all students meeting the study's participation criteria, irrespective of gender, race, economic status, or cultural background. Question-order bias was eliminated by employing curriculum-based tools. Furthermore, since the assessments involved physical demonstrations of students' abilities, the potential for bias in questioning was minimized.

Risks and Discomforts

There was a potential risk of coercion for parents and guardians, who might have felt pressured to enroll their students in the study due to the involvement of the family consumer science teacher. To mitigate this risk, the researcher assured parents/guardians that student participation or refusal would not impact the educational services, instruction, or interventions provided in the high school setting. All students participated in the cooking lab interventions, and

the study solely aimed to collect data and utilize student scores for publication purposes at its conclusion.

No physical risks were posed to participants, and grades or academic standing were unaffected by participation in the study. Parents and guardians were informed that students would not face any consequences for declining participation or changing their minds after initially agreeing to participate. Participation involved the voluntary sharing of student data in a manner that ensured student anonymity. There were no penalties or loss of benefits for declining participation in the study.

Reliability, Validity, and Limitations

The reliability and validity of the data collected in the study were ensured through the utilization of two diagnostic assessments: The Food and Eating Checklist (Appendix A) and the Cooking Skill Set Assessment (Appendix B). Cooking labs were consistently conducted for 90 minutes on the same two days of the week over nine weeks, enhancing reliability. Moreover, the use of two forms of the diagnostic assessment helped maintain the validity of the scores, as it prevented participants from becoming overly familiar with the questions.

To further ensure validity, the assessments were administered twice during the school year to prevent question familiarity. Once at the beginning of the study and once when the study ended. Valid results were obtained by allowing students to physically demonstrate their abilities, accommodating individual needs such as providing extra time for students who experienced fatigue or loss of focus during the cooking labs due to disability.

Additional factors contributing to the validity of the research included conducting the study during the first nine weeks of the school year, which provided an appropriate time frame, and selecting the most suitable method of data collection for second-grade students during the

initial weeks of school. Repeated measures of the assessment allowed absent students to make up missed cooking labs on their next available school day, ensuring a complete and accurate picture of student knowledge and skills.

The structured atmosphere established during the second week of school facilitated student engagement in the study, while the researcher's use of proximity control aided students in seeking assistance or asking questions as needed. These measures collectively contributed to the reliability and validity of the study's findings.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF QUANTATIVE DATA

Baseline data was gathered in September, specifically during the second week of the 2023-2024 school year. Collaborating with the special education teacher in the life skills classroom, the researcher assessed the incoming freshman population to establish study participation criteria. Subsequently, six students were identified as eligible for the study based on initial assessments. Of these six students, parental consent was obtained for five participants.

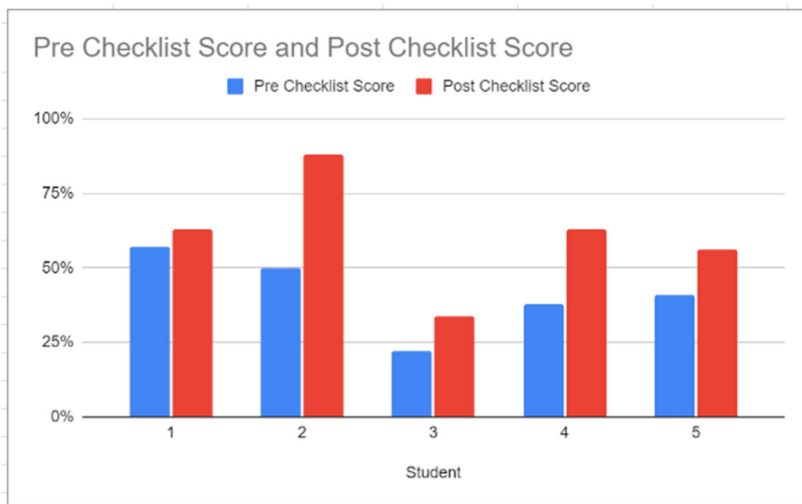
Figure 4.1 presents an insightful analysis of progress through the comparison of the Food and Eating Checklist Pre Score and subsequent Food and Eating Checklist Post Score results. The findings reveal a notable trend of growth and improvement, as evidenced by all five students achieving higher scores in the Post Checklist assessment compared to their initial baseline scores. This observed enhancement amounts to a significant 100% improvement overall. Of particular interest is the outstanding performance of Student #2, whose score increased by an impressive 38%, while Student #1 demonstrated a commendable increase of six percent. Notably, there were no instances of score decline among the students, emphasizing the effectiveness of the intervention.

Furthermore, the study's timeframe, encompassing the initial nine weeks of the freshman (9th grade) school year, adds depth to the analysis, lending credibility to the intervention practices, especially considering the students' limited exposure to cooking lessons. This temporal context enhances our understanding of the intervention's impact, highlighting its relevance and timeliness in the students' educational journey.

In light of the varied curricula present in both special education and general education classes, it becomes evident that there is a notable gap—a tailored curriculum explicitly designed to equip students with the skills necessary for independent cooking is lacking. However, within

this gap lies an opportunity for innovation and adaptation. The researcher's adeptness in navigating this educational landscape underscores the importance of customized strategies tailored to the unique needs of each student. Thus, while the path forward may present challenges, it also offers ample potential for transformative educational experiences to unfold.

Figure 4.1 Food and Eating Pre-Checklist Scores vs. Food and Eating Post-Checklist Scores



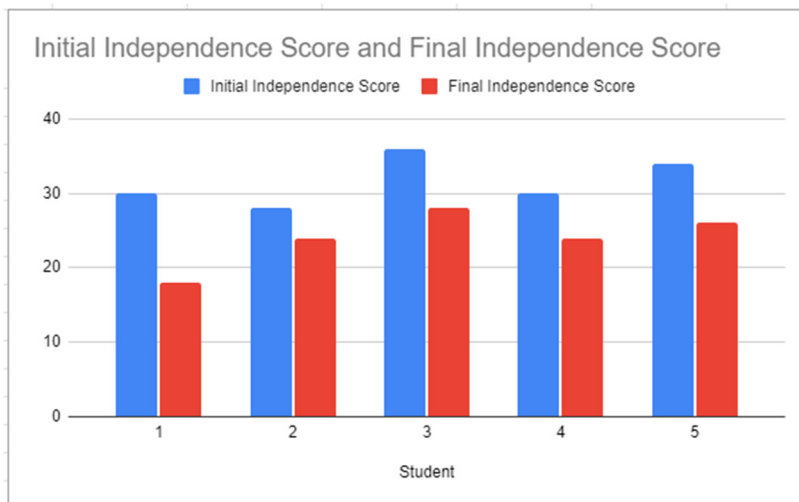
Note: Figure 4.1 provides a visual representation of the comparison between Pre Checklist scores and Post Checklist scores, demonstrating the progress made by all participants. It's important to note that this visual was custom-created by the researcher for the purpose of this study.

Upon careful examination of the data derived from the Cooking Skills Set assessment conducted by A Love for Special Learning, educators gain valuable insights into the trajectory of the study and the effectiveness of the implemented intervention. Across the board, all five participants demonstrated commendable progress, transitioning from the initial cooking lab conducted in early September 2023 to the culminating session in late October 2023.

Of particular note, Student #1 emerged as the leader in terms of advancement, achieving a remarkable 12-point increase in their scores. However, it is intriguing to note that while

Student #1 excelled on the Cooking Skills Set Assessment, their progress on the Food and Eating Checklist was comparatively more subdued. In contrast, Student #2, who exhibited the most significant growth on the Food and Eating Checklist, demonstrated relatively modest improvement on the Cooking Skills Set Assessment.

Figure 4.2 First Independence Cooking Skills Score vs. Last Independence Cooking Skills Score



Note: Figure 4.2 depicted the independence scores obtained from the initial cooking lab juxtaposed with those from the final cooking lab. This visual representation was meticulously crafted by the researcher exclusively for the purposes of this particular study.

Individual Assessments and Progression

Student #1

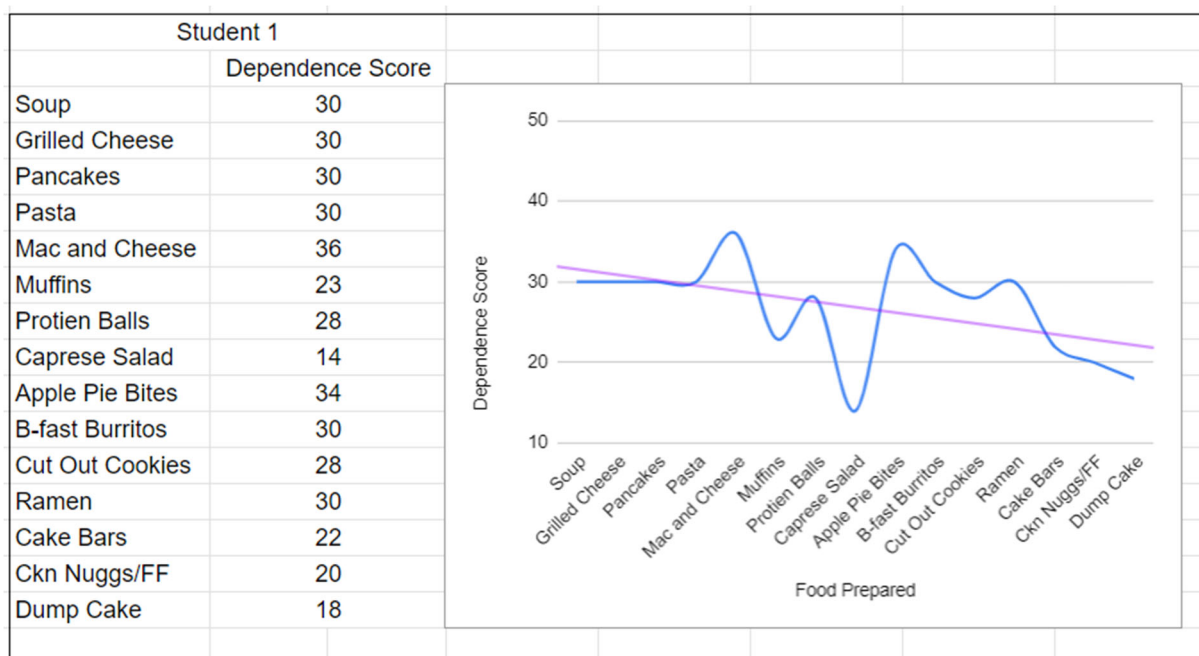
Student #1 has shown progress in their cooking skills throughout the study. Participating in all fifteen cooking lab data collections is impressive and indicates a strong commitment to learning. Achieving a score of 14 on one occasion, indicating complete independence in making a dish, is a clear indication of mastery in that particular skill.

The trend line showing a decrease in dependence on others over the course of the study is encouraging. It suggests that Student #1 is becoming more confident and capable in the kitchen, gradually requiring less assistance from others to complete tasks. This increase in cooking independence is a positive outcome and reflects the effectiveness of the study in fostering skill development.

Continued support and encouragement can help Student #1 further enhance their independence in cooking, ultimately leading to even greater mastery of culinary skills. Figure 4.3.1 provides a visual representation of Student #1's journey, illustrating a steady enhancement in cooking independence alongside a reduction in dependence over time.

Figure 4.3.1

Student #1: Independence Scores and Trend Line



Note: The graph, designed with a focus on the researcher's perspective, aims to showcase the program's progression from the initial cooking lab to the final one.

Figure 4.3.2 illustrates Student #1's limited progress in the Food and Eating Pre and Post assessment scores. Initially, they scored 13 out of 32 total points, equivalent to 57%, on the Food and Eating pre checklist assessment. Following the intervention, their score increased to 20 out of 32 points, or 63%. During this process, the student acquired skills in food preparation, safety, eating, and clean-up, although no improvement was observed in the manners category.

Overall, Student #1 exhibited the smallest percentage increase at 10.5% on this checklist. It is noteworthy that despite this minimal growth, the student demonstrated gains in independence based on the Cooking Skills Assessment.

Figure 4.3.2

Student #1: Food and Eating Checklist Pre and Post Scores

Student 1	Pre Score	Post Score
Food Preparation	44%	56%
Safety	43%	57%
Eating	50%	67%
Clean-Up	0%	80%
Manners	60%	60%
Total	57%	63%

Note: This cart, developed by the researcher, was tailored to display the starting point of the students before the initial intervention and their status again after the final intervention.

Student #2

Student #2 has demonstrated consistency and dedication by participating in all fifteen cooking lab data collections. While their progress may not be as pronounced as others in the study, their commitment to learning is still commendable. The consistent scores within a tight range suggest a potential plateau in skill development, yet it also reflects their sustained

engagement in learning. Despite progress being slower compared to peers, Student #2's steady improvement underscores their commitment to mastering culinary skills.

The reduction in dependence on others throughout the study signifies a positive trajectory, indicating that Student #2 is steadily growing in confidence and competence in the kitchen. Continued support and encouragement from instructors and peers can further motivate Student #2 to enhance their independence in cooking and continue their journey toward mastery of culinary skills. Figure 4.4.1 visually depicts the progress of Student #2, showcasing a consistent improvement in cooking independence while decreasing dependence as time progresses.

Figure 4.4.1

Student #2: Independence Scores and Trend Line

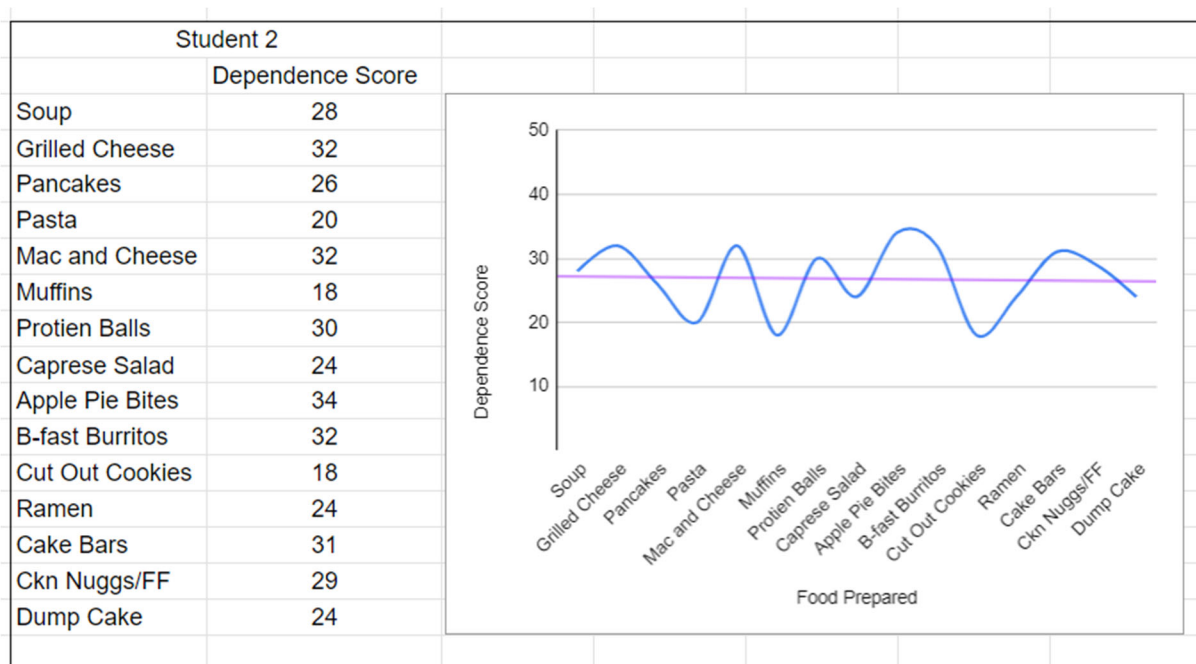


Figure 4.4.2 illustrates Student #2's significant growth in the Food and Eating Pre and Post assessment scores. Initially, Student #2 scored 16 out of 32 total points, equating to 50%, on

the Food and Eating pre checklist assessment. Following the intervention, their score soared to 29 out of 32 points, or 88%. During this process, the student acquired skills in food preparation, safety, and clean-up. While there were no improvements in the eating and manners categories, it's important to note that the student initially scored perfectly in those areas, leaving no room for enhancement.

Overall, Student #2 exhibited the highest percentage increase at 76% on this checklist. It's noteworthy that despite this remarkable growth, the student experienced the least gain in independence based on the Cooking Skills Assessment.

Figure 4.4.2

Student #2: Food and Eating Checklist Pre and Post Scores

Student 2	Pre Score	Post Score
Food Preparation	22%	67%
Safety	14%	100%
Eating	100%	100%
Clean-Up	40%	80%
Manners	100%	100%
Total	50%	88%

Student #3

Student #3 has made significant strides in their cooking skills throughout the study, participating in all fifteen cooking lab data collections, which demonstrates a commendable commitment to learning. However, despite this progress, they still require substantial intervention to achieve independence, as they continue to rely heavily on assistance.

Nevertheless, the trend line depicting a decrease in dependence on others over the study period is promising. It suggests that Student #3 is gradually gaining confidence and competence

in the kitchen, needing less assistance to complete tasks over time. This growing independence is a positive outcome and highlights the effectiveness of the study in fostering skill development.

To further enhance their cooking independence, continued support and encouragement will be vital for Student #3. With ongoing guidance, they can work towards achieving greater mastery of culinary skills. Figure 4.5.1 serves as a visual representation of their progress, showing the steady increase in cooking independence while decreasing their dependence over time.

Figure 4.5.1

Student #3: Independence Scores and Trend Line

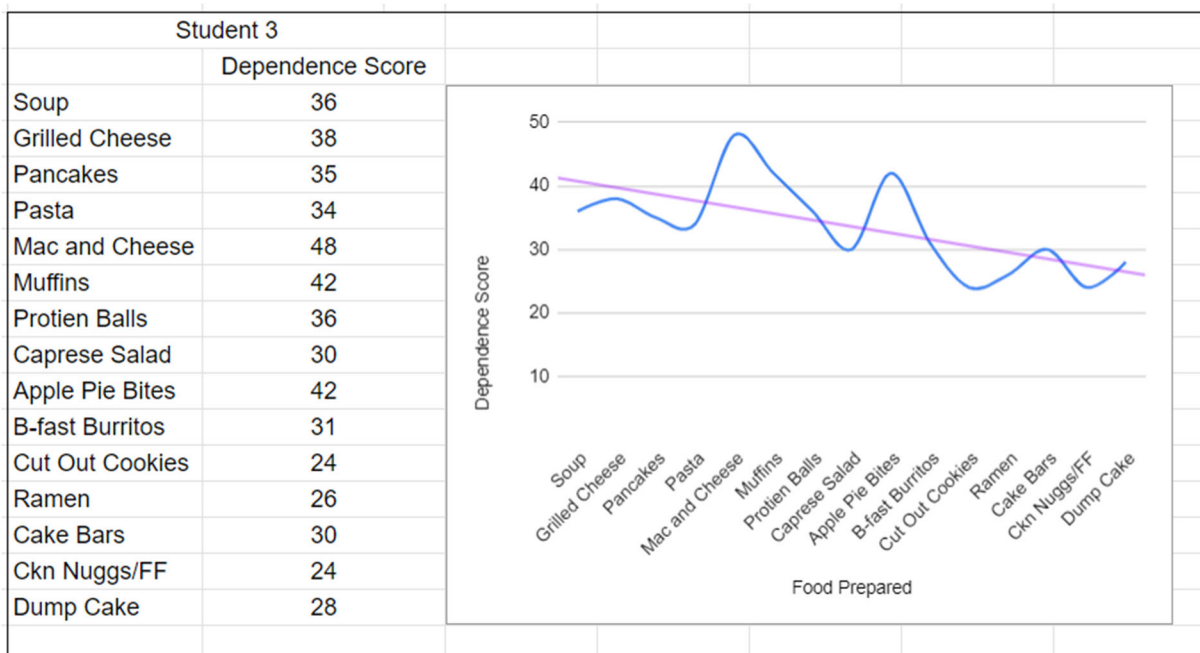


Figure 4.5.2 showcases Student #3's moderate growth in the Food and Eating Pre and Post assessment scores. Initially, Student #3 scored 7 out of 32 total points, equivalent to 22%, on the Food and Eating pre checklist assessment. Following the intervention, their score improved to 11 out of 32 points, or 34%. Throughout this process, the student developed skills in

food preparation, safety, and clean-up. However, there were no improvements in the eating and manners categories, which began and remained at 50% and 60% respectively.

Overall, Student #3 demonstrated a median percentage increase of 54.5% on this checklist. It's important to note that this student is overcoming the most challenging cognitive deficit among all participants in the study.

Figure 4.5.2

Student #3: Food and Eating Checklist Pre and Post Scores

Student 3	Pre Score	Post Score
Food Preparation	11%	33%
Safety	0%	14%
Eating	50%	50%
Clean-Up	0%	20%
Manners	60%	60%
Total	22%	34%

Student #4

Student #4 has made significant progress in their culinary journey throughout the study. Their commitment is evident in participating in all fifteen cooking lab data collections, showcasing a strong dedication to learning and growth. The fact that Student #4 has shown improvement in increasing independence and decreasing dependence is commendable. Achieving a score of 16 on one occasion, just 2 points shy of mastery, highlights their capability and potential in the kitchen. While there is still work to be done to reach complete independence, the overall trend indicates a positive trajectory towards self-sufficiency.

The trend line depicting a decrease in dependence on others further reinforces Student #4's journey towards cooking independence. This progression reflects the effectiveness of the

study in fostering skill development and underscores their growing confidence and competence in the kitchen. With continued support and encouragement, Student #4 is well on their way to further enhancing their independence in cooking and ultimately mastering culinary skills. Figure 4.6.1 serves as a visual representation of their progress, showing the steady increase in cooking independence over time.

Figure 4.6.1

Student #4: Independence Scores and Trend Line

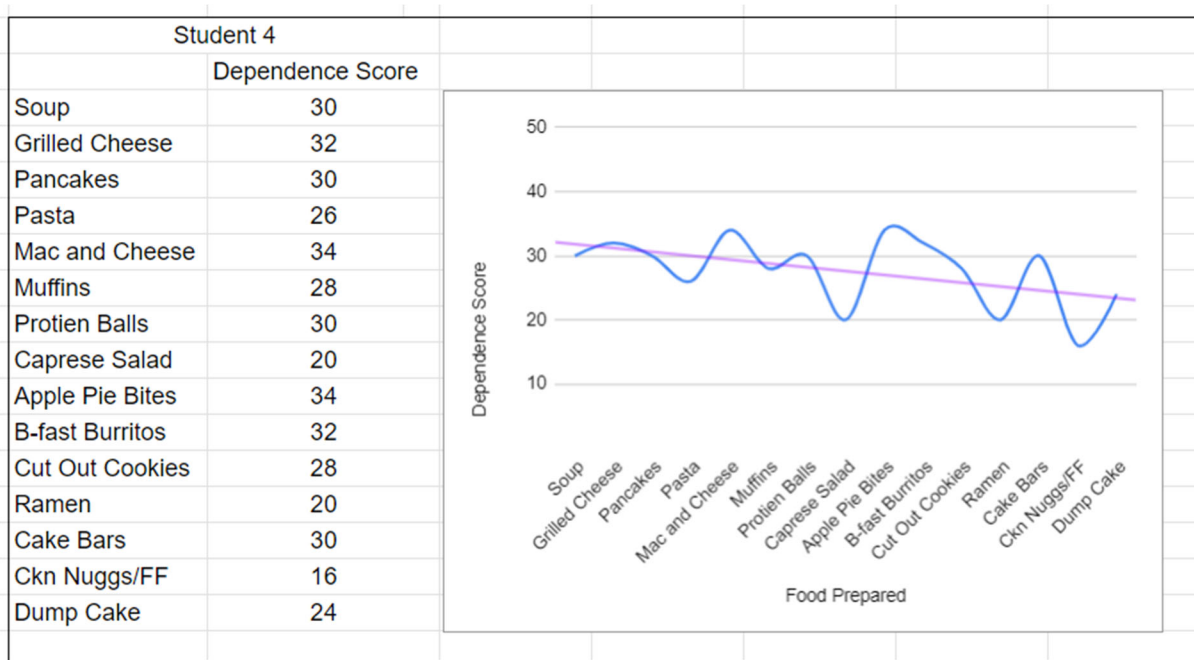


Figure 4.6.2 showcases the substantial growth achieved by Student #4 in the Food and Eating Pre and Post assessment scores, ranking as the second highest increase among the participants. Initially, Student #4 attained a score of 12 out of 32 total points, representing 38%, on the Food and Eating pre checklist assessment. Following the intervention, their score significantly improved to 20 out of 32 points, equating to 63%. Throughout this period, the student honed skills in food preparation, safety, and clean-up, indicating a notable advancement

in their culinary proficiency. However, there were no discernible improvements observed in the eating and manners categories. It's worth noting that Student #4 achieved a perfect score in the eating category on both the pre and post checklists, while maintaining consistency in the manners category.

Despite the lack of progress in certain areas, Student #4's overall performance exhibited the second highest percentage increase at 65.78%. This underscores their commendable efforts and signifies significant strides in mastering culinary skills throughout the study.

Figure 4.6.2

Student #4: Food and Eating Checklist Pre and Post Scores

Student 4	Pre Score	Post Score
Food Preparation	11%	33%
Safety	0%	29%
Eating	100%	100%
Clean-Up	20%	100%
Manners	80%	80%
Total	38%	63%

Student #5

Student #5 has been actively engaged in the cooking lab study, participating in all fifteen data collections, which demonstrates a strong commitment to learning and improvement.

The data suggests that Student #5 has indeed shown progress in increasing independence and decreasing dependence on others. However, it's noted that there is still a significant distance to cover before achieving complete independence. Despite this, the overall trend indicates a positive direction, with Student #5 gradually reducing their reliance on assistance and gaining more confidence in their culinary skills.

The trend line displayed in Figure 4.7.1 further supports this notion, showing a consistent decrease in dependence on others over the course of the study. This gradual decrease reflects the effectiveness of the study in fostering skill development and underscores Student #5's determination to become more self-sufficient in the kitchen. While there is still work to be done, with continued effort and support, Student #5 is well-positioned to further enhance their cooking independence and eventually achieve mastery of culinary skills. Figure 4.7.1 serves as a visual representation of their progress, showing the steady increase in cooking independence over time.

Figure 4.7.1

Student #5: Independence Scores and Trend Line

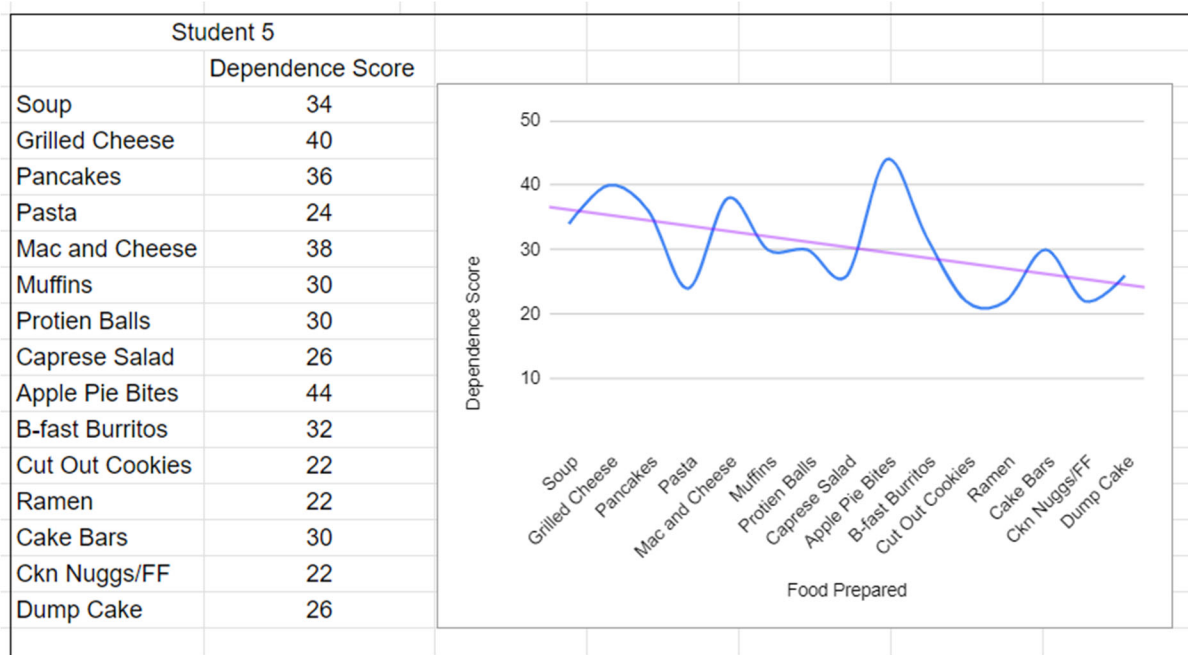


Figure 4.7.2 highlights Student #5's second lowest growth in the Food and Eating Pre and Post assessment scores. Initially, Student #5 achieved a score of 13 out of 32 total points, representing 41%, on the Food and Eating pre checklist assessment. Following the intervention, their score improved to 18 out of 32 points, equating to 56%. Throughout this period, the student

acquired skills in food preparation, safety, clean-up, and manners, indicating progress in various aspects of their culinary abilities. However, there were no discernible improvements observed in the eating category, as the student consistently achieved a perfect score in this area on both the pre and post checklists.

Despite the efforts invested, Student #5's overall performance exhibited the second lowest percentage increase at 36.58%. It is essential to recognize that this student has overcome cognitive obstacles, although these were not documented in the study. Nevertheless, gains were made in daily living skills, underscoring the broader impact of their progress beyond the scope of the assessment.

Figure 4.7.2

Student #5: Food and Eating Checklist Pre and Post Scores

Student 5	Pre Score	Post Score
Food Preparation	0%	33%
Safety	0%	14%
Eating	100%	100%
Clean-Up	60%	60%
Manners	80%	100%
Total	41%	56%

Patterns

One pattern that emerges from the study is the consistent commitment of all students to learning independence and improvement in culinary skills. Despite their varying levels of progress, all students participated in all fifteen cooking lab data collections, demonstrating their dedication to the program.

Another pattern is the overall positive trend in both cooking independence and food-related skills among the students. While some students may progress at a slower pace than others, there is a general upward trajectory in their abilities, as indicated by the trend lines depicting a decrease in dependence on others over time and the improvements in food and eating checklist scores.

Additionally, the study highlights the effectiveness of tailored interventions in fostering skill development. By customizing strategies to the unique needs of each student, the researcher was able to facilitate meaningful progress and create a supportive learning environment conducive to growth.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of individualized approaches in special education and the potential for transformative educational experiences when addressing students' specific needs and challenges.

Summary

The study, conducted over nine weeks of the freshman school year, underscores the relevance and timeliness of intervention practices, particularly considering students' lack of prior exposure to cooking lessons. In the absence of tailored curricula explicitly designed for independent cooking skills, the researcher's innovative approach highlights the importance of customized strategies tailored to individual student needs. Despite diverse curricula in special education and general education classes, the study fills a crucial void, offering transformative educational experiences tailored to students' unique requirements. The analysis of Cooking Skills Set assessments further elucidates the intervention's efficacy, with all participants showcasing commendable progress from the initial cooking lab to the final session. Notably, Student #1 exhibited the most significant advancement, with a 12-point surge in scores, indicating the

multifaceted nature of student development and the intricate interplay between assessment metrics.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETING RESULTS

Chapter 5 provides a concise summary of the study's outcomes and implications. It distills the findings from previous chapters, highlighting both the benefits and challenges of inclusive classroom settings, particularly in practical arts education. The chapter emphasizes the importance of fostering independence and skill development among students, especially those with low incidence disabilities, and suggests recommendations for future research to further enhance instructional strategies and outcomes.

The recommendations put forth in Chapter 5 aim to guide future research endeavors. They include increasing the duration of practical arts classes to facilitate deeper skill development, creating specialized curricula tailored to the unique needs of students with low incidence disabilities, and advocating for longer data collection periods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of student progress over time. These recommendations not only conclude the current study but also provide valuable insights for advancing inclusive education practices in practical arts settings.

Summary of Study

According to the research conducted by Hansen, Drake, and Vollmer, as well as local evidence point out a troubling deficiency in students' independence skills, leaving them unprepared for the responsibilities of adulthood. The continuous pursuit of effective intervention strategies is emphasized by the difficult situation where practical arts classes are being defunded in certain schools. Martin West suggests that cutting funding for public schools is a deliberate attempt to shape citizens into mere consumers by undermining their independence. "Cooking is a fundamental life skill and encourages a healthier diet."(Hansen, Drake, Vollmer, 2019, p.359). Despite this, many young adults lack proficiency in cooking. However, students who enroll in

cooking classes at school demonstrate increased confidence and acquire supplementary skills unrelated to cooking, which are highly valued by participants.

In a suburban eastern Pennsylvania school, five students participated in a hands-on cooking program, spending two, hour-and-a-half sessions per week over the first nine weeks of the 2023-2024 school year. Through this criterion-changing quantitative study, these students provided invaluable insights for educators in both practical arts and special education, informing future practices aimed at enhancing high school independence instruction and intervention, particularly in the realm of cooking skills and food preparation.

Findings Related to Literature

The literature review sheds light on the profound importance of practical arts education, especially through culinary classes, in nurturing autonomy, enhancing educational experiences, and promoting social integration among students with varied learning needs (Mu, Siegel, & Allinder, 2000). It underscores how practical arts, such as cooking, serve as a conduit for imaginative expression and interpersonal growth, providing students with avenues to explore their passions and abilities within a supportive milieu. Through immersive engagements in artistic and culinary endeavors, learners cultivate a hunger for knowledge and creativity, gradually diminishing their reliance on assistance and empowering them to navigate the world with increased assurance (Collins, Hager, & Galloway, 2011).

Additionally, the review underscores the importance of integrating practical arts education, such as culinary instruction, to address the specific needs of students with intellectual disabilities and facilitate their transition into adulthood (Newman, 1994). It underscores the transformative impact of inclusive education, demonstrating how collaborative teaching methods and the integration of core subjects with practical skills foster holistic development and foster

genuine social bonds among students (Bonati, 2018). By embracing innovative teaching strategies and harnessing the engaging nature of culinary activities, educators create inclusive learning environments that support academic, social, and emotional growth, laying the groundwork for long-term success. The study identified six major themes: motivation for learning, learning experiences, psychomotor skills, social skills, talents and interests, and overall teacher competency (Chakraborty & Stone 2009). This research suggests that teachers can enhance their effectiveness by designing inclusive classroom instruction that benefits all students (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). Moreover, an instructional approach based on the brain's natural learning system can optimize the productivity of inclusive classrooms (Rasmitadila, et al. 2021).

Furthermore, culinary classes not only foster independence and academic progress but also establish commendable inclusive environments owing to their interactive nature (Chakraborty & Stone 2009). Unlike conventional lecture-based formats, these classes often involve collaborative work in small groups, allowing students to interact with one another, fostering authentic friendships, and facilitating shared learning experiences (Boroson, 2017). Ainscow and Messiou (2018) observed enhancements in both communication forms and functions, enriching opportunities for social exchange and supporting peer-to-peer interactions during group activities. The interactive dynamics of culinary classes provide valuable opportunities for students with disabilities to hone essential communication, motor, and social skills, preparing them for interactions beyond the classroom (Ainscow & Messiou, 2018). Additionally, the literature review underscores the compelling role of culinary activities in motivating learning and engagement, exposing students to a variety of culinary traditions and sparking interest in diverse cultures (Chakraborty & Stone 2009). This interdisciplinary approach

not only enhances academic learning but also fosters creativity and self-expression through culinary exploration (Gagne, 2014).

In essence, the synthesis of literature underscores the multifaceted advantages of practical arts education, particularly through cooking classes, in nurturing independence, academic advancement, and social integration among students with diverse learning requirements. By embracing innovative pedagogical approaches and leveraging the interactive nature of culinary experiences, educators can establish vibrant and inclusive learning environments conducive to the holistic development of all students.

Subjective Analysis of Each Learner

Student #1

Throughout the Cooking Skills Set Assessments, Student #1 consistently demonstrated progress, displaying active engagement and enthusiasm for learning how to cook independently. Despite facing challenges related to frequent absences due to pregnancy, Student #1 remained committed to the program, diligently making up missed cooking labs on her next day of attendance. She eagerly shared her culinary creations with the researcher, seeking positive feedback and showcasing her growing familiarity with kitchen tools, which extended to her home cooking endeavors in anticipation of the new addition to her family. However, the student sometimes struggled with decision-making, particularly concerning preferences related to the father of the baby.

Interestingly, while Student #1 excelled in the Cooking Skills Set Assessments, she scored lower on the Food and Eating Checklist. This raised questions for the researcher about the potential factors influencing this discrepancy, such as preoccupation with the impending birth or differing perceptions of the checklist's importance. Nonetheless, the student's consistent progress

in the weekly assessments supported the hypothesis of increased independence in practical arts classes over time.

In summary, Student #1 demonstrated notable gains in content knowledge related to independent use of kitchen tools and reduced dependence on assistance while cooking. The data collected from assessments and bi-weekly scores indicate a decline in dependence, highlighting the productive nature of the study for Student #1, with potential long-term benefits beyond the research period.

Student #2

Throughout the Cooking Skills Set Assessments, Student #2 consistently demonstrated progress and engagement in the program, despite a few absences due to sickness. This participant showed enthusiasm for learning how to cook independently, often sharing their culinary creations with family members at home. Despite being selective about their own food choices, Student #2 took pride in preparing dishes for their family to enjoy, indicating a growing sense of confidence and responsibility in the kitchen. Additionally, the student, who is typically shy and soft-spoken, began to find their voice in the kitchen and even requested additional recipes to learn after the study concluded.

Interestingly, while Student #2 excelled in the Food and Eating Checklist, they scored lower on the Cooking Skills Set Assessment. This raised questions for the researcher regarding potential influences on the difference in scores, such as the student's level of interest in the dishes being prepared or their mentality towards learning and demonstrating culinary skills. Despite these considerations, the student's consistent progress in the weekly assessments supported the hypothesis of increased independence in practical arts classes over time.

In summary, Student #2 demonstrated significant gains in content knowledge related to independent use of kitchen tools and a slight decrease in dependence on assistance while cooking. The data collected from assessments and bi-weekly scores indicate a decline in dependence, highlighting the productive nature of the study for Student #2, with potential long-term benefits beyond the research period.

Student #3

Throughout the Cooking Skills Set Assessments, Student #3 consistently demonstrated progress and enthusiasm for the program, attending all study days with perfect attendance. This participant was actively engaged in the lessons and showed excitement about coming into the kitchen to cook. With a naturally social personality, Student #3 often took on the role of ensuring everyone was participating and completing their tasks.

While Student #3 showed dedication to the program and enjoyed eating the food they prepared, their scores fell within the median range. This led the researcher to consider potential factors influencing the student's performance, such as other skill deficits that may need attention before prioritizing independence in the kitchen. Additionally, the student's sociability could have played a role in their focus during cooking sessions.

Despite these considerations, Student #3's weekly assessments showed a slight increase over time, supporting the hypothesis of increased independence in practical arts classes. Overall, the study was productive for Student #3, leading to gains in content knowledge related to independent use of kitchen tools and a slight decrease in dependence on assistance while cooking. The assessment data suggests a modest decline in dependence, indicating the potential for continued progress beyond the research period.

Student #4

Throughout the Cooking Skills Set Assessments, Student #4 demonstrated consistent progress and enthusiasm for the program, with the exception of one missed day, which was promptly made up on the following attendance day. This participant actively engaged in the lessons and eagerly looked forward to cooking in the kitchen. With a sociable nature, Student #4 often ensured that everyone was on track and doing the right thing.

Engaging wholeheartedly in the program, Student #4 showed a strong work ethic and enthusiasm for tasting the dishes after cooking. Their sociability extended to calling over other students to showcase their work and seeking positive reinforcement from the researcher. Additionally, Student #4 occasionally requested to take food home to share with their parents, indicating pride in their culinary creations.

While Student #4's scores on the Cooking Skills Set Assessment were average, their performance on the Food and Eating Checklist ranked among the second highest. Despite this, the researcher still had questions regarding potential limitations due to the student's disability and the impact of their sociability on their focus during cooking sessions.

Nevertheless, Student #4's weekly assessments showed a slight increase over time, aligning with the hypothesis of increased independence in practical arts classes. Overall, the study proved productive for Student #4, resulting in gains in content knowledge related to independent kitchen tool use and a slight decrease in dependence on assistance while cooking. The assessment data suggests a modest decline in dependence, indicating the potential for continued progress beyond the research period.

Student #5

Throughout the Cooking Skills Set Assessments, Student #5 consistently demonstrated progress and enthusiasm for the program, with perfect attendance on study days. Engaging actively in the lessons, this participant showed genuine excitement for cooking and always approached the kitchen with a positive attitude. Student #5 worked diligently within the program and eagerly anticipated tasting the food after cooking.

While Student #5's scores on the Cooking Skills Set Assessment were average, their performance on the Food and Eating Checklist ranked among the second lowest. This suggests that the participant still has room for improvement before achieving complete independence in cooking. The researcher raised questions regarding the potential impact of the student's disability on their ability to make further gains, as well as the presence of other cognitive declines that may need addressing.

Despite these considerations, Student #5's weekly assessments showed a slight increase in independence, aligning with the hypothesis of increased independence in practical arts classes. Overall, the study proved productive for Student #5, resulting in gains in content knowledge related to independent kitchen tool use and a slight decrease in dependence on assistance while cooking. The assessment data indicates a modest decline in dependence, indicating potential for continued progress beyond the research period.

Unexpected Findings

In this specific study, several expected and unexpected findings emerged, shedding light on various aspects such as absenteeism, student ability, curriculum, literacy, conflicting data across two measurement tools, and the effects of students without disabilities. One unexpected discovery was the lack of clarity regarding student abilities, particularly in cooking skills, as the

participants were new to the school and considered freshmen. This lack of knowledge about student capabilities highlighted the need for a more comprehensive understanding of student skills before designing interventions. Additionally, the absence of a specific curriculum for inclusive classes posed challenges, leading to the selection of recipes that some students found challenging, thereby affecting their independence scores. Future replications of the study should prioritize assessing student ability with cooking tools and selecting simpler recipes to ensure the success of the intervention program.

It is important to note that another unexpected finding was the variation in literacy levels among students with low incidence disabilities, with some struggling to read recipes. This dependence on others for reading assistance raised questions about the validity and reliability of the assessment tools at the high school level. Future replications should consider incorporating literacy assessments and utilizing recipes with visual aids to support students with reading difficulties. Despite these challenges, the study observed an overall increase in independence across the board, as evidenced by a decrease in dependence scores. However, some students exhibited conflicting data between the Cooking Skills Set and the Food and Eating Checklist, prompting further examination of assessment bias and validity. Future studies should emphasize aligning assessment tools and exploring potential biases to ensure accurate and reliable data collection.

An expected variable throughout the study was student absenteeism, highlighting the need for flexibility in scheduling cooking labs to accommodate absent students. Additionally, while exploring connections between challenging categories of the Food and Eating Checklist, the researcher identified potential biases in the data related to gender, socioeconomic status, cognitive abilities, medication administration, and age. However, the study did not delve deeply

into these connections, indicating a need for further research to eliminate biased results in similar independence research studies. Furthermore, the study excluded students who had participated in the researcher's cooking classes from previous years to maintain data reliability, suggesting the importance of establishing consistent criteria and curriculum based on evidence-based research for future studies in practical arts and special education.

Inclusive classrooms create an environment where diversity and acceptance are integral, positively affecting all students. These settings enhance social skills by promoting interactions among a broad spectrum of peers, leading to improved empathy and understanding through exposure to varied perspectives and life experiences. Academically, inclusivity promotes the adoption of diverse teaching strategies that accommodate different learning styles. Ultimately, inclusive education equips students for a diverse society, emphasizing respect and inclusivity as core values.

Limitations

This study encountered a few limitations that could have affected its outcomes.

1. Student Absence/Pregnancy/Sickness: Absence for any reason or lack of participation could potentially affect outcomes due to lack of consistency and data collection.
2. Literacy: Some students may have had trouble delineating instructions due to the inability of reading instructions thus starting them off in a deficit of needed extra help to complete the recipe.
3. Difficulty of Recipe: The complexity of the recipes used in the study may have varied, potentially influencing students' ability to successfully complete tasks and demonstrate their skills.

4. Physical Ability: Students who receive occupational therapy in the school setting could potentially be at a disadvantage when using certain tools or equipment thus impacting their performance on the data gathered.

What is Working and What is Not Working

Engaging students in hands-on cooking labs proved highly effective in stimulating their interest and motivation to learn. Unlike traditional classroom lectures, these labs provided a dynamic learning environment that excited students and facilitated active participation. The study exceeded expectations in terms of student engagement, highlighting the value of tailored intervention programs for students with low incidence disabilities. This underscores the importance of incorporating practical, hands-on activities to enhance learning experiences and promote student success.

Consistency in class scheduling also emerged as a successful aspect of the study. Students benefited from the predictability of twice-weekly classes, allowing them to prepare mentally and express enthusiasm for upcoming cooking sessions. This routine fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among students, as evidenced by their proactive approach to discussing and planning for the labs. Such self-regulation and educational independence are vital skills that were inadvertently supported by the study's structure and scheduling.

However, one component that was deemed unsuccessful in the study was the students' ability to remember and apply cooking tips discussed with the researcher. Despite efforts to encourage self-reminders, students with low incidence disabilities may have faced challenges in retention and application due to their cognitive limitations. This raises questions about the effectiveness of memory-related interventions and their impact on students' independence and

assessment scores. Addressing memory-related difficulties and developing targeted strategies may be necessary to improve outcomes in future interventions.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of prioritizing practical, hands-on learning experiences for students with low incidence disabilities. Rather than solely focusing on academic achievement, educators should emphasize foundational skills and independence to better prepare students for adulthood. When designing curricula and instructional approaches, it is essential to consider the hands-on needs of students and provide opportunities for active learning and skill development. This approach ensures that educational interventions are tailored to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities, promoting their overall growth and success.

What is the Answer?

The data collected from the assessments strongly supports the study's hypothesis that learning how to cook can significantly increase independence, as reflected in the assessment scores. Both the Cooking Skills Assessment and the Food and Eating Checklist proved to be effective tools for measuring independence instruction. Across all students, there was a noticeable increase in independence, indicating the effectiveness of practical arts classes in fostering independence skills, particularly through hands-on learning experiences. Based on the research findings, it is recommended that students with low incidence disabilities actively participate in practical arts classes as part of their regular curriculum. Implementing a variety of instructional approaches, such as whole group and small group instruction, along with teacher professional development on inclusion practices, can further support independence instruction. Hands-on learning should be prioritized to provide students with meaningful and engaging experiences that promote skill development and independence.

Adjusting the sequencing of recipe difficulty to build upon mastered skills before introducing new tools or equipment can enhance instructional effectiveness. In the rural, low-income district where the study took place, educators plan to modify recipe difficulty to better address students' instructional needs and promote increased independence acquisition. Similar curricular changes should be advocated for across grade levels to ensure alignment and consistency in independence instruction. If replicated as an intervention program, providing remedial lessons at the conclusion of each week can help reinforce independence topics and prevent students from getting stuck at specific skill levels. Allowing for student discussion and questions can further enhance comprehension and retention of independence concepts, ultimately leading to quicker progress in independence scores.

Introducing an Intervention Specialist position within the district can provide valuable support for practical arts educators, including assistance with curriculum development, data analysis, special education reporting, and overall child study progress. Having a designated leader focused on intervention practices can streamline communication and promote successful instructional practices throughout the district. Additionally, a curricular change may be necessary to further support increased independence success within the district. Engaging all stakeholders in the curriculum development process and aligning grade levels and subjects can help identify needs and strengths within the current curriculum. This initial step lays the foundation for future improvements in independence instruction across all grade levels.

Future Research Recommendations

The study's findings yield crucial recommendations for future research endeavors, particularly in the realm of practical arts education for students with low incidence disabilities. A significant aspect of the study was the implementation of hands-on cooking labs as an

intervention method. To further this approach, it is crucial to delve deeper into professional development opportunities for educators. Providing educators with training and resources to incorporate cooking lab technology into the curriculum can empower them to adeptly facilitate interactive learning opportunities tailored to diverse learning requirements.

Considering the study's constrained sample size and timeframe, there arises a necessity to replicate the research with a more extensive cohort of students. Expanding the participant pool and including a more diverse demographic range would bolster the applicability of the findings. This strategy would foster a more comprehensive understanding of how cooking skills instruction influences students' independence across various contexts, encompassing different socioeconomic backgrounds and district settings.

A longitudinal study is recommended to explore the sustained effects of cooking skills education on students' independence over an extended period. Extending the duration of the intervention beyond the initial fifteen days would allow for a more in-depth examination of skill development trajectories and the durability of acquired competencies. This longitudinal approach is particularly pertinent for students with low incidence disabilities, as it can illuminate the long-term benefits and potential areas for continued support and intervention.

Furthermore, the study suggests increasing the frequency of practical arts classes, based on the success observed in the current research. However, to optimize instructional practices, it is essential to solicit feedback from both students and parents regarding their educational experiences. Gaining insight into students' views on their abilities, educational requirements, and preferred teaching approaches can shape curriculum design and instructional methodologies, promoting a more individualized and impactful learning atmosphere.

Moreover, alongside curriculum enhancement, there is a demand for the development of targeted teaching resources customized for students with low incidence disabilities within inclusive educational settings. Such resources should align with evidence-based practices and cater to diverse learning styles and abilities. Moreover, future research endeavors could explore the efficacy of different diagnostic assessments in identifying students' strengths and areas for growth. This nuanced approach can inform targeted intervention strategies and facilitate continuous improvement in practical arts education for students with diverse learning needs.

Summary and Conclusion/Concluding Remarks

In Chapter 5, I offer a comprehensive overview of the study's findings and their implications, emphasizing the significance of inclusive classroom settings, particularly in practical arts education. The chapter distills insights from previous sections, highlighting both the advantages and challenges of such environments, with a focus on fostering independence and skill development among students, especially those with low incidence disabilities. I also provide recommendations for future research to further refine instructional strategies and outcomes in practical arts education.

Linking the findings to the social model of disability enriches my understanding of the data. This model suggests that the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities are largely due to societal barriers rather than the individuals' own limitations. It advocates for societal changes to eliminate these barriers, promoting full participation for everyone.

My study's results showed that all students became less dependent on others as they gained more independence skills, fitting well within the social model of disability framework. This connection indicates that when educational settings are designed inclusively, they can reduce the societal obstacles that often hinder the autonomy of people with disabilities. The

introduction of cooking lessons in a setting that values inclusivity not only helped students learn essential life skills but also challenged and started to dismantle the barriers to independence that they face.

This link emphasizes the importance of carefully planned educational initiatives in building a more inclusive society for individuals with disabilities. When educational efforts are guided by the social model of disability, they contribute to a culture that embraces diversity in abilities and encourages independence.

My recommendations aim to steer future research efforts towards enhancing educational practices. I propose initiatives such as expanding professional development opportunities for educators to integrate cooking lab technology into the curriculum effectively. Additionally, I stress the importance of replicating the study with a larger student sample to bolster the generalizability of findings, along with conducting longitudinal studies to assess the sustained effects of cooking skills education on student independence over time.

The study's results shed light on various aspects, including unexpected findings related to student ability, literacy levels, and conflicting data comparisons between assessment tools. Despite challenges, the study underscored the effectiveness of hands-on cooking labs in stimulating student engagement and promoting independence. I also identified areas for improvement, such as addressing memory-related difficulties in retaining cooking tips.

Notably, the study highlighted the importance of practical, hands-on learning experiences for students with low incidence disabilities, emphasizing the need to prioritize skill development and independence. I also discussed successful aspects of the study, such as the consistency in class scheduling, which fostered student ownership and responsibility.

Moving forward, I recommend adjusting the sequencing of recipe difficulty and introducing remedial lessons to reinforce independence concepts. Additionally, the establishment of an Intervention Specialist position within districts and curricular changes to support increased independence success are proposed.

Lastly, I offer recommendations for future research endeavors, emphasizing the need for deeper exploration of professional development opportunities, replication studies with larger student samples, longitudinal assessments of intervention effects, and the development of targeted teaching resources for students with low incidence disabilities. These efforts aim to advance inclusive education practices in practical arts settings and promote the holistic development of all students.

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APPENDIX A: FOOD AND EATING CHECKLIST

Food & Eating Skills and Safety				
DOES THE INDIVIDUAL INDEPENDENTLY ...				
1	Food Preparation	-Store food appropriately (fridge, freezer, pantry).....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Locate food appropriately (fridge, freezer, pantry).....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Eat the 5 food groups (grain, dairy, protein, fruit, vegetable).....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Use appropriate heat -up/re-heat time.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Pour beverage into cup.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Measure ingredient (cup, spoon, etc).....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Set the table.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Follow a multi-step recipe (visual or text based).....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2	Safety	-Follow cooking directions on a box/bag.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Use the microwave safely.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Use the stove safely.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Use the oven safely.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Use oven mitts when touching hot surfaces.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Use knife to cut safely (hands away from blade).....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Use microwave safe materials.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
3	Eating	-Communicate choking to someone.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Use silverware appropriately.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Cut food into small pieces.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Drink from cup.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Wait for hot food to cool.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Chew and swallow.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
4	Clean-Up	-Stop eating when full.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Close-up containers/bags.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Put leftovers in container.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Clean counters/cooking surfaces.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Sweep floor, as needed.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5	Manners	-Wash dishes (cup, plate, silverware, cooking utensils, pots/pans, bowls, etc).....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Exercise portion control.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Wait between bites.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Chew with mouth closed.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Not talk with mouth full of food.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
		-Wipe mouth while eating/drinking.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Name: _____ Date: _____ Person Scoring: _____				
<small>©A Love for Special Learning</small>				

APPENDIX B: Cooking Skills Set

Skills Not Mastered = ☹️ 37-50 points		Working on Skill Mastery = 😐 15-36 points		Skills Mastered = 😊 10-14 points
The following are skills that you should master specifically in cooking/preparing a meal.		☹️ Does not attempt, needs more than 3 prompts	😐 Is semi-familiar with skill, needs 1-2 prompts	😊 Is independent
	Skill	Mastery Level		
1 Prompts -----	Wash hands with soap/produce	5	3	1
2 Prompts -----	Set the dinner table	5	3	1
3 Prompts -----	Find ingredients for recipe Fridge:----- Freezer:----- Pantry:-----	5	3	1
4 Prompts -----	Find supplies/equipment needed for recipe	5	3	1
5 Prompts -----	Identify: Measuring cups:----- Measuring spoons:-----	5	3	1
6 Prompts -----	Measure ingredients: Measuring cup:----- Measuring spoon:-----	5	3	1
7 Prompts -----	Safely cut an ingredient using knife, chopper, or scissors (open bottle, jar, bag, etc)	5	3	1
8 Prompts -----	Operate kitchen appliances Microwave Oven Stove Can opener Toaster	5	3	1
9 Prompts -----	Follow recipe/box directions (slides, steps, pictures) in order	5	3	1
10 Prompts -----	Clean up after meal: Dish/plate/other:----- Cup:----- Silverware:----- Counter-top:----- Leftovers:-----	5	3	1
Notes: <u>Correct portion size:</u> Yes No <u>Used general kitchen/cooking safety protocol:</u> Yes No				TOTAL POINTS
Cooking Skill Set		Name: -----		Attempt # -----
Date -----		Meal: -----		Final score: -----
©A Love for Special Learning		☹️ ☐ 😊		

APPENDIX C: CITI Program Certificates



Completion Date 03-Jun-2023
Expiration Date 03-Jun-2027
Record ID 56284123

This is to certify that:

Meredith Capuano


Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Conflict of Interest mini-course
(Curriculum Group)
Conflict of Interest
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Stage 1
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Slippery Rock University

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.



Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w2cb6fb7f-34ed-4ace-9f63-13efde67d636-56284123



Completion Date 06-Jun-2023
Expiration Date 06-Jun-2026
Record ID 56284124

This is to certify that:

Meredith Capuano

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of
certification through CME.

Institutional/Signatory Official: Human Subject Research
(Curriculum Group)

Institutional/Signatory Official: Human Subject Research
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Slippery Rock University



Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wb6c8400e-f4ef-47af-a200-a7c0e43f9a81-56284124

APPENDIX D: School District Approval Letter



VALLEY VIEW HIGH SCHOOL

One Columbus Drive • Archbald, Pennsylvania 18403
Telephone: 570-876-4110 • Fax: 570-803-0217

July 3, 2023

Dear Institutional Review Board,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I give Mrs. Meredith Capuano, under the direction of Dr. Jeremy Lynch, permission to conduct the research titled, *The Effects of Cooking Independence on High School Life Skills Students* at Valley View High School. This also serves as assurance that this school complies with requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and will ensure that these requirements are followed in the conduct of this research.

Mrs. Capuano will conduct her research within the normal scheduled life skills inclusive classes with Farm to Table for the first nine weeks of the 2023-2024 school year. She will utilize the Life Skills: Cooking Skill Set Assessment, along with Foods Skills and Safety Assessment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Larry Pegula". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being particularly prominent.

Larry Pegula
Principal

APPENDIX E: Parent/Guardian Phone Script

Scripts

Parent

Hello, I am Mrs. Capuano the cooking teacher in the high school. Your child will be cooking in our cooking lab this year with our Farm to Table students. I was wondering if you would give me permission to share data that I collect with other faculty, educators, and professionals in order to help educational practices in the future and to meet my dissertation requirements through Slippery Sock University. Starting the second week of school I will teach a cooking lesson in your child's classroom and then students will come over to my classroom to cook where I will collect data. If you do not want to participate in the study, no consequences will be put into place. Your child will still have the ability to participate in the cooking lesson and cook in the cooking lab, I just won't collect data. You or your child may quit the study at any time if desired. I want to assure you that if you or your child decide to not participate in the study or you or they decide to withdraw, there will be no effect on the parents' and students' relationship with the teacher and the grades that the student will receive. I also want you to know that even if you give permission your child will also be asked for permission. Both parent and child must give permission for participation.

Do you give permission for your child to participate in the study? "yes" or "no"

Thank you so much.

Meredith Capuano

APPENDIX F: Student Script

Student

Hello, as you might know, I am Mrs. Capuano (Mrs. Cap). Next week we are going to start cooking lessons and cooking in the lab. I was wondering if I could share the data that I collect from cooking with other teachers and professionals. It will also help me with my college work at Slippery Rock University. I want you to know that it is okay if you do not want to participate in the study. You will still get to cook with the class I just won't share your information. Nothing else will change.

Do you give me permission to take notes on your cooking classes? "yes" or "no"

Thank you so much!

Mrs. Cap

11. PROJECT ASSURANCES

Project Title: The Effects of Cooking Independence on High School Life Skills Students

A. INVESTIGATORS' ASSURANCES

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as an investigator, I am responsible for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance of this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Slippery Rock University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Slippery Rock University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Slippery Rock University policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
 - b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the IRB
 - c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
 - d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the IRB in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise the IRB, by letter, in advance of such arrangements. I understand that a student cannot act as a Principal Investigator at any time.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Slippery Rock University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a request for continuation and supply all supporting documents to the IRB before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Slippery Rock University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Dr. Jeremy Larkh

Printed name of Principal Investigator


Principal Investigator's Signature

7.7.23

Date

Meredith Capuano

Printed name of Co-Investigator

Meredith Capuano
Co-Investigator's Signature

7/7/2023

Date

Printed name of Co-Investigator

Co-Investigator's Signature

Date

Printed name of Co-Investigator

Co-Investigator's Signature

Date

Printed name of Co-Investigator

Co-Investigator's Signature

Date

Printed name of Research Assistant

Research Assistant's Signature

Date

Printed name of Research Assistant

Research Assistant's Signature

Date

Printed name of Research Assistant

Research Assistant's Signature

Date

*If more space is needed, please attach a second signature page.

**If submitting electronically, please print the first two pages, obtain signatures and send to the IRB Office at 302 Old Main.

12. PURPOSE

- a. Clearly state all of the objectives, goals or aims of this project.

The purpose of this study is to solidify the need for inclusion in practical arts classes, specifically cooking class for students with low incidence disabilities. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) both mandate that all students, including those with moderate-severe disabilities (MSO) receive access to the general curriculum, however there is not an agreed upon definition of access to the general curriculum (Collins et al., 2011). Within the inclusive education movement studies have documented that there are benefits to students both educationally and socially (Mu et al., 2000). Students with low incidence disabilities (students in a life skills classroom setting) are often not included into the general education setting thus losing an opportunity to learn skills such as increasing independence, self-esteem, and social network as well as building tolerance and appreciation of others (Mu et al., 2000). This study will attempt to answer the following question:

How does providing students with low incidence disabilities an inclusive cooking classes affect student independence and self-esteem?

- b. How will the results of this project be used? Include all intended uses (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation? Quality Improvement?)

The results of this study will be utilized for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Special Education at Slippery Rock University. In addition, the results of the study may be used for state-wide, national, or local presentations at conferences and professional development workshops. Also, this dissertation may be utilized for publication.

13. LOCATION OF RESEARCH SRU Campus Off-Campus Both

For off-campus, list all locations where the data collection will take place. Be as specific as possible. Permission letters must be attached for off-campus locations such as school districts, organizations, businesses, Physician's Offices, etc.

Valley View High School
1 Columbus Dr.
Archbald, PA 18403

14. PARTICIPANTS

- a. Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project.
(If data are existing, check here and describe the population from whom data were collected.)

The participants will involve 3 - 6 students diagnosed with low incidence disabilities who are placed into the life skills classroom at Valley View High School as determined by their Individual Education Program. Students from the life skills classroom participate with the general education curriculum in the general education classroom for cooking lessons, as written in their IEPs, and these participants will be first year cooking lesson students. These participants have different disabilities that may face a range of challenges related to learning, including difficulty generalizing and/or transferring information, inputting and retrieving information from memory and short attention spans. They are also considered to have subaverage intellectual functioning with limits in communication, self care, home living, and/or social skills (Taber-Doughty et al., 2011).

Criteria for inclusion are...

1. Students diagnosed with a low incidence disability (low incidence disabilities could include students diagnosed with intellectual disabilities, traumatic brain injury, multiple disabilities, visual and/or auditory impairments, orthopedic disabilities, and/or Autism) in the 9-12 grade life skills classroom, integrated into a general education classroom with non disabled peers of the same class grades.

2. The participants are all enrolled in the Valley View School District. Valley View is located in Lackawanna County, 20 miles north of Scranton, PA. The district encompasses the boroughs of Archbald, Blakely, and Jessup. The district covers approximately 52 square miles; 18,437 people reside within its boundaries of which 2,400 are Valley View students. The Life Skills classroom includes 11 students, 1 teacher, 1 paraprofessional, and 1 student aid that are in grades 9-12. The general education students that will work along side the students from the life skills classroom will be 19 advanced culinary students from 11th and 12th grade.

The students in this class will be participating in the cooking class as part of their normal educational program regardless of their participation in the study. We are asking to use the data collected from this study to publish the results of an inclusive cooking class on the independence and self-esteem skills of individuals with low incidence disabilities.

If using existing data:

What is the minimum number of records that need to be accessed for you to validate the study? N/A

What is the maximum number of records you wish to access? N/A

*You may not access more records than the maximum number without prior approval from the IRB.

- b. Describe why this participant population is appropriate for inclusion in this research project. (include inclusion and exclusion criteria for participant selection.)

According to Bisanti Chakraborty and Sandra Stone, one way to motivate students during class is by exposing them to different kinds of food (Chakraborty et al., 2009). Collaboration between general education and special education can improve learning outcomes for students with and without disabilities and it is a flexible approach to meet the diverse learning needs of students (Bonato, 2018). This study will follow students with special needs cooking along side students without special needs and track their data to see if they are indeed receiving a benefit from collaborating in a flexible learning environment. This group of participants was specifically chosen because they are also considered to have subaverage intellectual functioning with limits in communication, self-care, home living, and/or social skills (Taber-Doughty et al., 2011).

- c. Describe in numbered steps all procedures you will use to recruit participants (i.e., Step 1, etc.). Include a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate.

1. Parents will receive a phone call from Mrs. Capuano explaining the study and asking for permission to collect data.
2. Emails will be sent out as a follow up to the phonecall.
3. Students will have a 1:1 meeting with Mrs. Capuano requesting permission to collect data for the study during the first week of school.

If collecting new data:

What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study? 3 (Three)

What is the maximum number of participants you wish to enroll? 6 (Six)

*You may not enroll more participants than the maximum number without prior approval from the IRB.

- d. Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.

(If no compensation will be given, check here)

Select the type of compensation: Monetary Incentives

Raffle or Drawing Incentive (Include the chances of winning.) Please see the [Expenditures of Public Funds Policy](#) for guidelines.

Extra Credit (It is against the policy of the IRB at SRU to allow extra credit to be given to students in a class for participating in research unless an equal inducement is offered for an assignment of equal burden. If such a plan is made, it must be reviewed and approved by the IRB.)

Other

Description:

15. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS

- a. Describe in numbered steps all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants (i.e., Step 1, etc.).

Check here if this is "not applicable"; you are using existing data.

1. Participants parents will receive a phone call followed up by an email asking for consent. The email will have an attachment of the Consent To Participate Letter. The co-investigator will ask the participants parents/guardians to read the consent and sign if they approve. The co-investigator will allow for all questions to be answered and will remind parents that their student can withdraw at any time.

2. Students will have a meeting with the life skills teacher and the Family Consumer Science teacher (researcher) asking for verbal consent. Verbal consent will be documented. The life skills teacher is requested to be there to verify verbal consent or non-consent.

- b. Describe the procedures you will use in order to address your purpose. Provide in numbered steps a description of how you will carry out this research project (i.e., Step 1, etc.). Include specific information about the participants' time and effort commitment. (NOTE: Use language that would be understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Without a complete description of all procedures, the Slippery Rock University IRB will not be able to review this protocol. If additional space is needed for this section, please attach extra pages after page 6 of this form.)

1. The researcher will have a 1:1 conversation with each student to find out prior food skills and safety knowledge using the Food Skills and Safety Assessment (FSSA). The FSSA is a checklist that asks if the student independently... pours a beverage into a cup, uses the microwave safely, follows cooking directions on a box/bag, etc. The answers are yes or no. This assessment will be completed before cooking classes begin and after the 9 week data collection period is over.

2. One day a week students will have a lesson with the researcher about a cooking. The lesson will be determined by what is being made each week and will be either a cooking method or a kitchen tool. For example, the week we make macaroni and cheese, the researcher will introduce a colander and teach what it looks like, what it's used for, how to use it, and where it is stored in our kitchen. Every other week two cooking lessons will be taught and students will cook two dishes in the cooking lab.

3. On a separate day after the lesson, students will cook a recipe in the cooking lab. Each cooking lab is an hour and a half lab that includes time for set up, cook, and cleanup. They will have two, second year culinary students with them as cooking buddies to help guide the students with any questions should any arise. Students will cook one dish independently and the researcher will score their skills using a Cooking Skills Set Assessment. The Cooking Skills Set Assessment will consist of 10 cooking prompts scored at a 5, 3, or 1 to show: does not attempt, is semi-familiar with skill, or is independent, respectively. Students will be assessed in skills such as; finds the ingredients for a recipe, measures ingredients, operates kitchen appliances, ect. If a student can not perform a skill they will be given prompts and prompts will be documented to solidify the reasoning behind giving a score of 5, 3, or 1. Fives will be given if a student needs 3 or more prompts, a three will be given if a student needs 1-2 prompts, and a one is given if a student completes the skill with no prompts.

4. The researcher will complete the Cooking Skills Set Assessment as she circulates around the room for each student during 15 cooking labs. The first Cooking Skill Set Assessment will be used as the baseline.

5. Following the cooking class sequence, the researcher will have a 1:1 conversation with each student to find out prior food skills and safety knowledge using the Food Skills and Safety Assessment (FSSA).

- c. **List all data collection instruments used in this project.** (e.g. surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

Data collection for this research study will include data collection sheets (Cooking Skills Set Assessment, and Food Skills and Safety Assessment) from A Love for Special Learning and used with permission granted on 6/21/2023. Cooking Skills Set Assessment will grade a student on a range of how independent a student is with a specific skill set and the Food Skills and Safety Assessment is a yes or no checklist that helps to determine if a student can independently complete a skill.

- d. **Data analysis: Explain how the data will be analyzed.**

"Direct observations are made in the natural setting in which clients [participants] normally function" (Kazdin, p.92). Direct observations will be conducted in the cooking lab which is the natural classroom that cooking classes are held in. During the cooking lab the researcher will make tally marks when a prompt is needed to complete a skill. After each cooking lab the researcher will complete a Cooking Skill Set Assessment per participant. The tallies taken will help to rate the participants in the specific skill sets (Kazdin, 2011). More than 3 prompts (tallies) needed means the skill is not mastered. If a participant needs 1-2 prompts (tallies) the participant is working on skill mastery, and if there are no prompts (tallies) needed the skill is considered mastered. The less that prompts are needed the more a skill is mastered. Once the data is collected and scored the researcher will create a simple line graph that will "consist of session by session performance of the subject over time" (p.324). Each cooking lab will be documented on the x-axis and the Cooking Skill Set score will be documented on the y-axis rendering the graph immediately determinable on performance (Kazdin, 2011). The baseline will be rendered during the first cooking lab using the Cooking Skill Set Assessment. Each consecutive cooking lab will be assessed in the same manner using the same assessment. Because "the score for each day can take on any value of the dependent measure and may be higher or lower than the previous occasions the data points will be connected to produce a line" (p. 324). As the frequency or assessment score increases the data points will increase showing success however, if the frequency stays status quo or decreases the data points will reflect that as well.

16. **RISKS & DISCOMFORTS:** List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research. If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and describe the debriefing procedures you plan to use.

Breach of confidentiality is the only potential risk because this study is only collecting data.

17. **PRECAUTIONS:** Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #16. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals.

Confidentiality will be protected by assigning each student a number. The results for each student will be documented in the study by student number and each student's personal number will be kept under lock and key separately from the data in the co-investigators office.

18. If using the Internet to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.
(These are likely listed on the server's website.)

N/A, the internet will not be used to collect data.

19. BENEFITS

- a. List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.
(Do not include "compensation" listed in #14d.) Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants.

Reading, writing, and mathematical skills are required for cooking. Cooking also provides opportunities to learn about nutrition, healthy eating, and geography. Cooking is an active and meaningful activity that can be transferred to adulthood (Newman, 1994). Direct benefits that students may see are...

1. Preparing their own food.
2. Social Skills
3. Home Living Skills
4. Self-Care Skills
5. Communication Skills

- b. List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.

This study is aimed to prove the benefit of inclusion for students with special needs and the necessity for them to be included into the general education curriculum to increase their independence ultimately rendering them able to care for themselves in to adulthood and less likely to be taken care of by the taxpayers (general population).

20. PROTECTION OF DATA

- a. Will data be collected as anonymous? Yes No **if "YES", skip to part "e".**
("Anonymous" means that you will not know who participated and you will not collect any identifiable data and there is no reasonable way to identify or match data to individual participants.)

- OR -

- b. Will data be collected as confidential? Yes No
("Confidential" means that you will collect and protect identifiable data)
- c. If data are collected as confidential, will the participants' data be coded or linked to identifying information?
 Yes (if so, describe how linked.) No

Each participant will be given a assigned number. No identifiable information will be utilized in the reporting of the results.

- d. Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.

Each participant will be given a assigned number. The number will not be linked to any identifiable information. The participants will be given a number in order to ensure confidentiality when analyzing and reporting the data.

- e. Describe how and where the data will be stored [e.g. hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.], and how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.

All data and participant/parent signed consent documents will be kept for 3 years following the completion of the study. All data will stored via hard copy paper. Data collected will be stored by the researcher in her home office under lock and key.

- f. Who will have access to participants' data?

Data will be accessed by the investigator and co-investigator only.

- g. When is the latest date that confidential data will be retained? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained)

Signed consent forms and data tracking forms will be stored for up to three years in the co-investigators home under lock and key. Data and consent will be destroyed after the three year time.

- h. How will the confidential data be destroyed? (NOTE: Data recorded and analyzed as "anonymous" may be retained indefinitely.)

All data will be shredded.

21. QUALIFICATIONS OF INVESTIGATORS: include a brief summary that includes the investigators relevant prior experiences, qualifications and/or credentials as related to the research protocol

a. Principal Investigator:

Dr. Jeremy Lynch is a professor in the Department of Special Education and a member of the SRU IRB. Dr. Lynch has conducted several single-subject and quasi-experimental studies with students under the age of 18 as participants. Dr. Lynch teaches a mathematics interventions course at SRU and is actively involved in the field of mathematics and special education.

b. Co-investigator(s):

Meredith Capuano is a former special education teacher (8 years) from Behavioral Health Associates and East Stroudsburg Area School District. She is the current (1.5 years) family consumer science teacher at Valley View School District. She received her Associates Degree in education from Luzerne County Community College and her undergraduate degree from East Stroudsburg University in Elementary Education and Special Education. She also received her Masters Degree in Special Education from East Stroudsburg University. She is certified in elementary education K-6, special education K-21, family consumer science K-12, as well as having a special education supervision certification. She has mostly taught in a middle school emotional support setting however, currently she is teaching in a family consumer science classroom pushing to include students from the life skills classroom. She is currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Slippery Rock University.

c. Research Assistant(s):

PROTOCOL REVIEW CHECKLIST

All protocols must include:

- Research Protocol Application Form (All signatures included and all sections completed)

Depending on the level of review you may or may not have any or all of the items below.
Please check those that are included in this application.

- Informed Consent Documents**
 - Consent Form – to be used for adults 18 and older
 - Assent Form – to be used for minors under the age of 18
 - Parent/Guardian Form – to be used in addition to the assent form
 - Informational Letter – to be used when signatures are not necessary
 - Photo/Videotape/Audiotape Release Form – to be used when photographing/videotaping/audiotaping
- Appendix A**, "Reference List"
- Appendix B** if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., are used to recruit participants. Be sure to attach them in the order in which they are listed in #14c.
- Appendix C** if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Be sure to attach them in the order in which they are listed in #15c.
- Appendix D** if you will be using a debriefing form or include emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists (A referral list may be attached to the consent document).
- Appendix E** if research is being conducted at sites other than Slippery Rock University or in cooperation with other entities. A **permission letter** from the site / program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project.
- Appendix F** if research being conducted is submitted under the exempt level of review, the appropriate exempt research category appendix form is required.
- Appendix G** if research being conducted is submitted using any type of consent forms, the informed consent checklist must be attached.

NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of **IRB approval** from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.

APPENDIX H: Assent to Participate



VOLUNTEER ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Cooking Classes Increase Independence in High School Students

Meredith Capuano
Valley View School District
mcapuano@valleyviewsd.org
mcs1010@sru.edu; 570.236.4995

Dr. Jeremy Lynch
Professor of Special Education
Slippery Rock University
Jeremy.Lynch@sru.edu; 724.738.2463

I want to tell you about a research study I am doing and see if you want to take part in it. Research is a way to learn more about something. Each week you will be coming over to my classroom to cook with the Farm to Table students. Everyone gets to pick a recipe so each week we will make something different that you pick.

The name of this study is: Cooking Classes Increase Independence in High School Students. Do you know why cooking classes are important? They are important because if you can cook something you can feed yourself. Cooking creates independence. Independence is where you can do something all by yourself! If you can cook a box of mac and cheese, you don't have to ask mom, or dad, or grandma to make it for you. You can make it yourself! The researcher is: Mrs. Cap (me). I am doing this research project for college. I would like your help. As you are cooking, I am going to write notes. That is all. You get to cook all school year, but for 15 times during over a nine week period I am going to take notes. I am asking if you will let me use those notes for this study. Even if you don't want me to use these notes, you will still get to cook in my class. I just won't share the notes with anyone other than your parents/guardians and your special education teacher as part of your normal school routine.

It is okay to ask questions about what I am telling you. You can circle or highlight things on this paper you want to know more about. If you don't understand something, just ask me. I want you to ask questions now and anytime you think of them. I am working to find out how much cooking you can do all by yourself.

You are being asked to be in this research study because your class comes to my classroom once a week already. For you to be in this study both you and your parent (or guardian) must agree to you being in it. It is the adult's job to make sure being in this study is okay for you. But it is still up to you if you want to do it. Parents and children say "no" for different reasons. It may be that you would miss too many activities or school. Whatever the reason, it is your decision. You will not be treated any differently if you say "no."

If you decide to be in this research and your parent or guardian says yes, this is what will happen: I will come to your classroom once a week and teach you about a cooking tool! Then you will come to my classroom and cook with that tool. I will then take notes while you cook. Those notes will then be used to tell other people about how cooking is important for helping you live more independently.

Some of the ways you could be helped are: Some kids feel excited to learn how to cook and some students feel good about helping other students. Some students could learn how to cook all by themselves.

We do not know for sure if you will be helped by being in this study. Also, we could learn something that will help other children with cooking someday. There is a chance that during the research you could feel uncomfortable, afraid, lonely, or sad. We will take steps to help you with these feelings or discomforts. And you can stop at any time if you want to.

You don't have to be in this study if you don't want to. Nobody will be mad at you if you don't want to be in the research study. You can say okay now and you can change your mind later. Just tell Mrs. Cap or your parent/guardian if you want to stop at any time.

<p>Signature: I have read this form or someone has read it to me. If I did not understand something, I asked the researcher to explain it to me. I can always ask a question about the study if I don't understand something. I will be given a copy of this form.</p> <p>Please check one box:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES, I want to be in this study and I know I can change my mind later.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO, I do not want to be in this study.</p> <p>Child's Name (print legal name): _____</p> <p>Child's Signature: _____</p> <p>Date of signature: _____</p>
--

The following should be completed by the Principal Investigator conducting the assent process if the child agrees to be in the study. Check all that apply.

- The child is capable of reading and understanding the assent form and has signed above as documentation of assent to take part in this study.
- The child is not capable of reading the assent form, but the information was verbally explained to him/her. The child signed above as documentation of assent to take part in this study.
- The child had ample opportunity to have his or her questions answered.

<p>Printed name of Principal Investigator: _____</p> <p>Signature of Principal Investigator: _____</p> <p>Date of signature: _____</p>
--

APPENDIX I: Parent/Guardian Consent



PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Cooking Classes Increase Independence in High School Students

Meredith Capuano
Valley View School District
mcapuano@valleyviewsd.org
msc1010@sru.edu; 570.236.4995

Dr. Jeremy Lynch
Professor of Special Education
Slippery Rock University
Jeremy.Lynch@sru.edu; 724.738.2453

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study. In order for your child to participate, they must be in the high school's life skills program. Taking part in this research project is completely voluntary.

Important Information about the Research Study

Things you should know:

- The purpose of the study is to collect data from students in the life skills classroom who cook in an inclusive cooking lab with students from a general education setting.
- If you choose to allow your child to participate, I will collect data on independent skills that they may learn from cooking in an inclusive environment.
- Risk from this research could include potential breach of confidentiality.
- The study may increase the independence skills for each student by increasing their ability to take care of themselves.
- Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Your child doesn't have to allow us to use their data and you or they can withdraw the permission to use that data at any time.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your child to take part in this research project.

What is the Study About and Why are We Doing it?

The purpose of the study is to determine if students with special needs increase their independence by participating in inclusive cooking classes. This research is being conducted because students with special needs are sometimes limited from participating in general education classes. Being in an inclusive classroom helps students with and without special needs to create friendship, respect for others, independence, acceptance, and to learn from a positive student culture environment.

What Will Happen if Your Child Takes Part in This Study?

If you agree to allow your child to take part in this study, Mrs. Capuano will collect data while they participate in cooking class. Participation in their study is specifically to collect data on an activity that they will participate in as part of their typical school day.

How Could Your Child Benefit From This Study?

Your child might benefit from being in this study because they will learn skills to create independence such as cooking and using different kitchen utensils.

What Risks Might Result From Being in This Study?

Breach of confidentiality is the only potential risk that could result in being in this study.

How Will We Protect Your Child's Information?

I plan to publish the results of this study. To protect your child's privacy, I will not include any information that could directly identify your child.

I will protect the confidentiality of your child's research records by assigning your child a number. Your child's name and any other information that can directly identify your child will be stored separately from the data collected as part of the project.

What Will Happen to the Information We Collect About Your Child After the Study is Over?

I will not keep your child's research data to use for future research or other purposes. Your child's name and other information that can directly identify your child will be kept secure and stored separately from the research data collected as part of the project.

What Other Choices does Your Child Have if They Don't Take Part in this Study?

If you choose to not permit your child to participate, there are no alternatives. However, your child will still participate in the cooking class as part of their normal education curriculum.

Your Child's Participation in this Research is Voluntary

It is totally up to you and your child to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you or your child decide to be part of the study now, you both may change your mind and stop at any time. Your child does not have to answer any questions they do not want to answer. If your child decides to withdraw before this study is completed, all data that was collected will be destroyed.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

If you have questions about this research, you may contact Meredith Capuano, 570-236-4995, mcapuano@valleyviewsd.org

Contact Information for Questions about Your Child's Rights as a Research Participant

If you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the following:

Institutional Review Board

Slippery Rock University
104 Maltby, Suite 302
Slippery Rock, PA 16057
Phone: (724)738-4846
Email: lr@sru.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to allow your child to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. I will give you a copy of this document for your records. I will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of my child as a participant in this study. I freely consent for my child to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

Name of Child (Printed)

Printed Parent/Guardian Name

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

By signing below, I indicate that the parent/guardian has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and have been given a copy.

Principal Investigator's Printed Name

Principal Investigator's Signature

Date

APPENDIX J: Exempt Research Category



Exempt Research Category 1 Appendix

When conducting research that falls within exempt category 1 as identified in the specific criteria and limitations according to 45 CFR 46.104	
1.	<p>Please explain why your research will not adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction.</p> <p>In a typical school week students from the life skills classroom cook in the general education cooking lab with students from the general education population. When there are holidays and other events throughout the school year the students join together for extra cooking classes. This research is just collecting data on the already typical curriculum. This research will not adversely impact students because it is already part of their typical curriculum and we are only collecting data from their typical lesson.</p>
2.	<p>Will the research occur outside of commonly accepted educational settings?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – STOP, the research does not qualify for exempt Category #1; submit under Expedited Review</p>
3.	<p>Will any research methods deviate from normal educational practices?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - STOP, the research does not qualify for exempt Category #1; submit under Expedited Review</p>
<p>If after completing this appendix you have determined that your research does qualify for an exempt review under this category, please fill out the Protocol Application Form found on the IRB website under Forms (http://www.sru.edu/offices/institutional-review-board/how-to-apply-to-the-irb) and submit this appendix with your protocol.</p> <p>You can receive submission guidance by emailing your questions to irb@sru.edu.</p>	

Revised August 2021