

# Cooking Classes in Elementary School and Their Efforts: With a Focus on Acquiring Knife Skills

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## Abstract

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Acquiring skills in cooking classes in home economics is not the sole objective. However, although many teachers give up teaching these skills, it is important for students to master them which can be used effectively in students' daily lives. This study examines the following three points:

1. Are there any changes in students' thinking after taking cooking classes in home economics?
2. Do students acquire cooking skills through these classes?
3. What does the acquiring of skills in cooking classes mean for students?

Ten hours of cooking classes were planned and carried out, focusing on acquiring skills. Questionnaires and the measurements of cutting and peeling skills for 39 elementary school students (18 boys, 21 girls) in Saitama Prefecture were administered before and after the cooking classes. The data were collected from May to July, 2012. In the questionnaires, students were asked how often they did housework and how much they recognized their own skill levels. The measurement of skills included slicing cucumbers and peeling potatoes. After taking the classes, most of the students did housework more frequently and came to like cooking, and became more confident in their cooking skills. They acquired knife skills through practice. Their peeling skills were improved more than slicing skills. The most important finding was that students understood and were able to evaluate their own skill levels.

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*Key words:* cooking skills, knife skills, cooking classes, investigation into skills