

Parachute Essay #2 - Cooking

I really enjoy cooking, and sometimes I feel confident in my cooking ability enough to cook for other people. This semester, even through all the work I had to do, I found the time to cook three study breaks and one enormous Friday lunch. These cooking experiences are examples of both the absence and the presence of collaboration, which helped me to learn something about people, and myself which subsequently and coincidentally put me in a good light with my teachers and my peers.

My first kitchen expedition this semester was the Friday lunch in the Experimental Study Group (ESG) lounge. I decided to work by myself, firstly because I thought I would be able to handle everything, and secondly because it has worked for me in the past to work independently. I used an online supermarket to order my groceries for the lunch and instead of ordering thirty individual carrots, I actually ordered thirty four-pound *bags* of carrots. In hindsight, if I had been working with someone else, maybe they would have noticed this and saved me from such embarrassment. Even though all the cooking miraculously seemed to work out and tasted great (if I may say so myself), the amount of time and effort that I had to put into it – the self-driven slavery to the stove – was incredibly arduous. One might argue that it was worth it in the end for the praise that I received for cooking a delicious lunch that many people enjoyed. In my opinion, however, the only benefit of cooking that particular lunch was learning that collaboration and co-operation with at least one other team member would have made the job much easier.

Around that time near the beginning of the term, I found another person in my dormitory who I could share my interest in cooking with. His name is Max. We made three study break dinners/midnight snacks together composed of bread and cakes all made from scratch, often also improvised. It amazed me what a difference it made to both the planning and cooking stages of the productions. Having another like-minded person to bounce ideas back and forth with and to share the joy and satisfaction of the complimentary remarks we received afterwards was very fulfilling.

MIT is not the same as high school – it is not impossible to find like-minded people who will share the workload. I learned that working with just one other person of this kind can make the task at hand much more pleasant and even enjoyable. I feel that this realization put me in a good light with Max, for working together so well and enjoying cooking together, and also put me in a good light with the residents of Desmond, for making delicious study breaks that everybody enjoyed.