Centering Equity in Direct Education Curriculum Selection: A New Tool From Washington State SNAP-Ed

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Objective: Washington State SNAP-Ed Curriculum, Training, and Website team (CTW), in partnership with Leah’s Pantry, developed a curriculum rubric that incorporates participant lived experience, principles of health and racial equity, and trauma-informed education practices.

Use of Theory or Research: CTW conducted the following: A literature review on incorporation of equity principles in direct education, key informant interviews with SNAP-Ed implementers, and focus groups with the SNAP-Ed eligible audience. Qualitative research identified common themes around needs and desires for nutrition education.

Target Audience: The tool was created for use in assessing curricula in Washington State SNAP-Ed by the CTW Team and program implementers.

Program Description: In 2021, Washington State SNAP-Ed developed an Equity and Anti-Racism Strategic Plan, establishing a framework for change. To support these efforts, CTW collaborated with Leah’s Pantry to create a new rubric that evaluates curricula on principles of health and racial equity and trauma-informed education practices. Along with continued anti-racism and equity trainings, this tool helps SNAP-Ed implementers provide inclusive, community responsive programming.

Evaluation Methods: Formative evaluation was imperative, with focus groups and key informant interviews providing insight for the criteria and rating scale development. CTW continues to coordinate with the WA State SNAP-Ed Evaluation team to assess effectiveness as well as applicability of curricula selection to diverse audiences.

Results: Major themes from formative evaluation informed the language and criteria for the two versions of the rubric. Previous curriculum assessment tools were limited in scope, complexity, and flexibility. The new rubric emerged with the ability to assess curricula based on content, ecological factors, instructional design, physical activity, and facilitator experience. The Implementer version encourages consideration of connections to multi-level PSE approaches and to note modifications. An Explainer Guide aids users with definitions and examples.

Conclusion: Development of tools to assess curricula from multiple perspectives increase the quality of nutrition education in Washington and help to achieve WA SNAP-Ed’s commitment to equity, anti-racism, and justice.

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Change in Dietetic Students’ Attitudes Toward Older Adults Following a Nutrition Education Program for Older Adults

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Background: Reverse mentoring and service-learning experiences offer experiential learning opportunities for college students. These experiences can encourage young adults to provide support and knowledge to older adults, promote mutual support through knowledge sharing, and improve student attitudes toward working with older adults. Moreover, delivering technology-enhanced nutrition education to older adults through a reverse mentoring and service-learning project has yet to be studied.

Objective: This exploratory study’s aim is to capture nutrition student instructors’ attitudes toward aging. Furthermore, we assessed their desire to work with older adults following participation in a reverse mentoring and service-learning nutrition education intervention, where students teach older adults how to use the “Start Simple with MyPlate App.”

Study Design, Settings, Participants: Five student instructors were recruited and trained through the Department of Health and Exercise Science to deliver an 8-week nutrition education for older adults enhanced by technology.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Data collection occurred before and after the 8-week intervention through a survey containing both open and close-ended questions. The Geriatrics Attitudes Scale (GAS) was used to assess student instructors’ attitudes toward aging and working with older adults. Descriptive statistics reporting includes mean, standard deviation, percentages, and frequencies. A paired-sample t-test examined changes in GAS scores.

Results: Five student instructors, ages 20-28, completed the intervention. At baseline, three students regularly interacted with older adults. All students agreed the program enhanced their professional development. At baseline and post-intervention, three out of five students planned on working with older adults in their careers. Changes in pre- and post-intervention GAS scores were not statistically significant (54.6±5.7 vs. 57.0±4.95, d=0.487).

Conclusion: Preliminary data shows no change in student instructors’ attitudes toward aging nor desire to work with older adults; however, our sample of students already had a generally positive attitude toward aging. These pre-
Characterizing Goal Setting by the Registered Dietitian for Adolescents With Newly Diagnosed Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

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Background: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a prevalent condition manifesting in adolescence and is associated with obesity and type 2 diabetes. Given this lifelong burden, early dietary modifications are beneficial to mitigate PCOS severity. Registered Dietitians (RD) play an important role in guiding diet-related strategies following a PCOS diagnosis. While goal setting is a critical tool for promoting behavior change, standardized and effective approaches for dietary management of adolescents with PCOS are lacking.

Objective: To characterize goal setting by RDs for adolescents newly diagnosed with PCOS at a multi-specialty PCOS clinic.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: Nutrition notes recorded by RDs of patients (n=118) seen for PCOS between 2015 and 2020 were extracted from medical records and de-identified. A collaboratively generated code book was used to code nutrition notes in Dedoose™ based on open coding and a priori objectives. One investigator (MG) coded all notes and exported excerpt subgroups stratified by number of nutrition goals set. Four investigators (MG, HV, EMG, AU) independently reviewed excerpts to identify emerging themes and then collaboratively discussed common themes to identify prevailing concepts.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Goals were characterized for emerging themes using qualitative content analysis by four investigators.

Results: Adolescents were on average 16 years old (range, 11-21 years) and 70.3% had a BMI > 30kg/m2. Parent(s) attended 89% of visits. Of the 118 nutrition notes, 7 notes set 0 goals, 10 set 1 goal, 40 set 2 goals, and 61 set 3+ goals. The main themes identified were: 1) use of the MyPlate tool; 2) focus on modifying carbohydrate intake including restricting simple carbohydrates (eg, reduce sugar-sweetened beverages) or pairing carbohydrates with other macronutrients (eg, protein or fat); and 3) a lack of parental inclusion in the goals.

Conclusion: MyPlate and carbohydrate intake are frequent goal setting starting points for RDs evaluating adolescents with PCOS at the multi-specialty clinic evaluated.

Classification of Early Childhood Educators’ Behaviors to Improve WISE Implementation

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Background: Together, We Inspire Smart Eating (WISE) is a curriculum focused on increasing fruit and vegetable consumption among preschoolers. Early Childhood Educators’ (ECEs) fidelity to WISE, attitudes toward WISE, and workplace influence are important for promoting successful implementation, in accordance with the established Fidelity, Attitude, and Influence Typology (FAIT).

Objective: This study explores change, from baseline to midpoint, in FAIT of ECEs in centers utilizing WISE. Using baseline FAIT classification, ECEs were targeted with tailored implementation facilitation to improve fidelity and attitude. We hypothesized this strategy would increase the proportion of ECEs with high fidelity.

Study Design, Setting, and Participants: At baseline and midpoint: Research assistants coded fidelity on a 1 (“Not at all”) to 4 (“Very much”) scale for 4 WISE evidence-based practices (EBPs; role modeling, mascot use, positive feeding practices, and hand-on exposure); and ECEs completed self-report surveys to measure their workplace influence across the school year.

Results: From baseline to midpoint results were used to update implementation facilitation. ECEs with attitude and influence scores >3 on 3 or more EBPs were deemed as meeting fidelity. ECEs with attitude and influence scores >4 were designated as positive and influential, respectively. Baseline to midpoint change was compared on FAIT.

Conclusion: These results suggest that using FAIT to inform facilitation supports ECEs to move toward adoption with high fidelity. We expect these improvements to correlate with improved child health outcomes and program sustainment.

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