Impactful Course Activities and Assignments and Suggested Improvements to Food Security-Focused Collegiate Curriculum

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Background: Providing comprehensive food insecurity education and training in higher education is critical for preparing nutrition, public health, and social work students to address this issue in their future careers. Not much is known about course activities that aim to prepare students to screen, monitor, and intervene upon food insecurity in their future careers.

Objective: To describe impactful food security-related course activities and to synthesize student suggestions to improve the training of future nutrition, public health, and social work professionals.

Study Design, Setting, and Participants: A cross-sectional 31-item questionnaire was completed by 306 undergraduate and graduate nutrition, public health, and social work students attending higher education institutions across the United States (n=13). This abstract summarizes two open-ended questions that captured current impactful course activities/assignments and student suggestions to improve college curricula.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Inductive thematic coding approach by two independent coders to analyze current course activities/assignments and student suggestions to improve college curricula.

Results: Class lecture and discussions about food insecurity topics were most frequently reported by students as impactful activities. Lectures or discussions that focused on defining food security and populations that are at greater risk for food insecurity were most impactful to students. Students suggested improving curricula by increasing awareness of food insecurity resources, building skills to assist populations with food insecurity, and enhancing current course curricula. High emphasis was placed on increasing application-based opportunities (eg, service-learning), skills training, awareness of community and campus food security resources, and coverage of food security topics.

Conclusion: Impactful training to prepare students to assess and respond to food insecurity in individuals and communities is a public health need. Student respondents in this study suggest means of enhancing their food insecurity-related training, which may be used to develop a toolkit for instructors in related fields.

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counties received active design plans.

**Conclusion:** HT implemented obesity prevention PSE interventions with varying degrees of sustainability. Staff identified grant restrictions, large geographic spread, and limited human and material resources as significant challenges for rural communities which can inform future strategy selection.

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### Maximizing Reach of SNAP-Ed Resources Through Dosage Data

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**Background:** Utah’s SNAP-Ed program Create Better Health (CBH), provides programming to improve healthy behaviors among low-income adults, including an 8-class nutrition education series. Due to the demand for SNAP-Ed education and limited funds, CBH conducted a study to determine the minimum number classes in a series that would influence significant behavior change.

**Objective:** The study’s objective was to better understand how the number of classes attended impacts behavior to identify the most cost-effective duration of nutrition education for limited-resource adults in Utah.

**Study Design, Settings, Participants:** A nonexperimental study design was used. The study sample included CBH nutrition education series participants from June 2020 to June 2022. Using a pre-post survey design, participants self-reported a variety of nutrition, physical activity, and food resource management behaviors before and after participating in the series.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** Descriptive statistics were collected and analyzed. Responses to questions about health behaviors (e.g., stretching food dollars to last the entire month and using MyPlate to make food choices) were compared between groups who participated in 1-3 classes, 4 classes, 5-7 classes, and 8 or more. Differences among groups were analyzed using an Independent Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test. Significance was defined as p < 0.05. Bonferroni correction was used in pairwise comparisons.

**Results:** There were 151 study participants. Analysis indicated that participants who only attended 1-3 classes showed significantly less improvement in 4 behaviors compared to participants who attended 4 or more classes: stretching food dollars (p = 0.021), choosing a variety of foods (p = 0.023), shopping with a grocery list (p = 0.018), and following USDA food safety recommendations (p = 0.001). Additionally, no significant differences among any assessed behavior occurred among participants in 4 classes compared to those that participated in 5-7 classes, or 8 or more classes.

**Conclusion:** This study’s findings suggest that a 4-class series would provide a similar impact on healthy behaviors as an 8-class series. Offering a 4-class series requires fewer resources and allows for more series to be offered without losing significant behavior outcomes.

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