

# Increasing Scratch Cooking in Wisconsin Schools through Culinary Training

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## Introduction

Wisconsin Team Nutrition works to improve the environments of schools and child care sites to be conducive to the development of healthy behaviors related to food and nutrition. Since 2012, efforts have been focused on providing training and resources to schools to increase scratch cooking. These efforts include two summer series of in-person culinary trainings, the development of six web-based culinary skills training videos, and a printed resource guide.

**Objective:** Increase the number of school nutrition professionals incorporating scratch-cooking recipes into menus by providing culinary skills trainings.

## Team Nutrition Culinary Trainings

A chef-led, skills-based culinary training was offered to school nutrition professionals at 12 locations across the state. Participants were taught culinary techniques that can be used to prepare healthier foods, as well as menu planning strategies that utilized USDA Foods and local produce to meet the meal standards. Additionally, participants received copies of chef-developed recipes, USDA's *Recipe for Healthy Kids* cookbook, and the Institute for Child Nutrition's *Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals* resource.



### Evaluation

220 participants completed a post-training survey to measure the effectiveness and value of the training on a four point scale (4 – strongly agree; 1 – strongly disagree). The training received a score of 3.7 on effectiveness of meeting education needs, 3.8 on providing useful information and resources, and 3.8 on overall value. Additionally, a follow-up survey was sent 6 months after the training to measure prevalence of scratch cooking and the reach of peer-to-peer training. Results indicated that 75% of the 42 survey respondents increased the amount of scratch cooking at their school and 45% completed peer-to-peer training, reaching an additional 152 school nutrition professionals.

## Self-Reported Change in Scratch Cooking by Culinary Training Participants

Did Not Increase Scratch Cooking  
24%



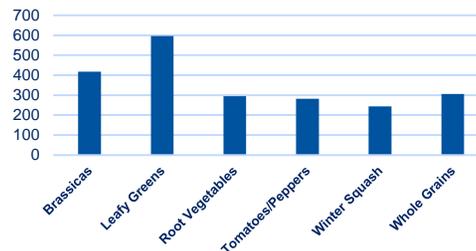
Increased Scratch Cooking  
76%

## Chop! Chop! Culinary Skills Training Videos

The *Chop! Chop! Culinary Skills* training video series consists of six training videos that are designed to help school nutrition professionals use more whole grains and fresh, Wisconsin-grown fruits and vegetables in the school meal program. Each video introduces a specific culinary skill needed for cooking with fresh produce or whole grains and one or two standardized recipes for each product being featured.



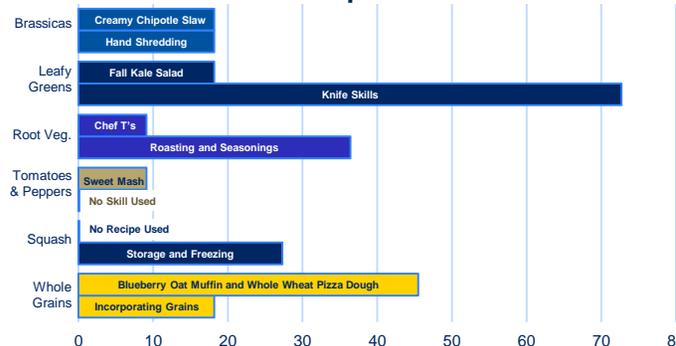
### Viewership by Video Title



### Evaluation

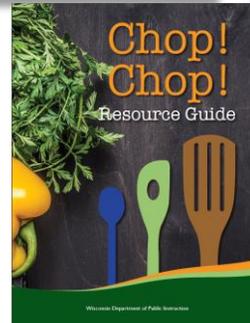
Videos were posted on YouTube and viewed a total of 2,162 times. Viewers were asked to complete a brief survey following the conclusion of each video. A total of 220 surveys were submitted. Respondents answered questions on a four point scale (4 – strongly agree; 1 – strongly disagree). On average, video effectiveness was rated at 3.3. Additionally, a follow-up survey was administered to 58 people who viewed all six videos to determine use of learned culinary skills and recipes. Over 80% of respondents reported to using at least one new skill and 64% of respondents reported utilizing at least one new recipe in the school meal program.

### Percent of Respondent Usage of Video Components



## Chop! Chop! Resource Guide

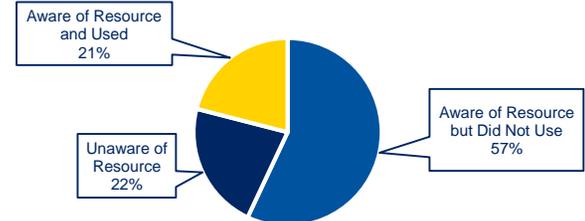
The *Chop! Chop! Resource Guide* is a compilation of the recipes featured in the *Chop! Chop! Culinary Skills* training videos and includes information about Wisconsin crops, procurement of local products, food safety, and professional development. It was designed to supplement the videos but can serve as a stand-alone resource for schools without an interest in receiving culinary skills training.



### Evaluation

The *Chop! Chop! Resource Guide* was distributed to nearly 800 school nutrition directors. A survey link was sent to all directors 4 months following the resource distribution to determine reach and usage of the resource. 180 people responded to the survey. Overall, 78% of people were aware of the resource, but only 21% had utilized the recipes included in the guide.

### Knowledge and Use of the Chop! Chop! Resource Guide



## Conclusions

In-person and web-based trainings are effective ways to teach culinary skills, introduce new foods, and increase the amount of scratch cooking done at schools. Providing print resources as a stand-alone resource was not overly effective in increasing use of culinary skills and scratch cooking. However, print resources are beneficial supplements to in-person trainings. Scratch cooking can be a way to expand the variety of healthy school lunch offerings. This may assist schools in reducing the sodium content of foods served in school meals and increasing student participation in the National School Lunch Program.



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