Delivering Nutrition Messages to Secondary School Students with Brief, Interactive Linking Lessons

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BACKGROUND

The Michigan Nutrition Network at the Michigan Fitness Foundation and Wayne State University sought to investigate an innovative method to deliver nutrition topics to high school students by integrating USDA SNAP-Ed messages into three different instructional settings: physical education, health education and social studies. Five Linking Lessons, complemented by colorful posters, were developed. A Registered Dietitian delivered the five lessons once per week over the course of five weeks. The lessons were delivered in each participant’s classroom or gymnasium along with a food tasting. Teachers were then provided the poster and teacher lesson so that they could replicate the Linking Lesson with their other classes throughout the day or week.

LINKING LESSONS

• Poster and Poster Preview
• Talking Points

ENGAGE STUDENTS:

Last week I challenged you to try a new fruit or veggie. What did you try?

Snacks make up a big part of the foods we eat in a day. What foods could be whole-grain? [granola bar, apples in your locker. Real fruit juice (orange, English muffin, popcorn, cracker, rice cake, chips]

Students Attitudes About Including Nutrition Education and Nutrition Linking Lessons—Posters

GOALS

Increase knowledge about healthy snack options.

Awareness of fruits and vegetables with the message that emphasizes that they do not need much preparation, other than washing and maybe peeling or slicing them.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:

shows a food that is comparable to the beverage on the right in each pair. This poster contains six boxes, each with a pair of beverages. The drink on the left has a certain amount of calories or sugar? Which food group do the nuts, peanuts and potato chips belong to?

Snacks make up a big part of the foods we eat in a day. Which food group do the nuts, peanuts and potato chips belong to?

ESPECIALLY FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATORS

Drink Healthy

Michigan Food Assistance Program Hotline: (800) 481-4989.

States Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program by way of the Michigan Nutrition Network at the Michigan Fitness Foundation. These institutions are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs or disability. People who need help buying nutritious food for a better diet call the Michigan Food Assistance Program Hotline: (800) 481-4989.

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SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION:

• Integration of nutrition topics into Science, Math and English Language Arts with brief interactive Linking Lessons
• Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Linking Lessons when combined with other nutrition education programming in various settings
• Examination of the training needs for school staff who will be implementing the lessons without a nutrition educator present

RESULTS

Linking Lessons: PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS

Linking Lessons: HEALTH CLASS

“IT WAS VERY FUN AND INFORMATIVE…” “THE LESSONS WERE GREAT AND ENTERTAINING…” “I LIKED IT ALL…” “I LOVE THE LESSONS AND IT HAD ME THINKING HEALTHY…” “I ACTUALLY LOVED ALL THE LESSONS AND TIPS…”

CONCLUSIONS

Linking Lessons were delivered as reinforcing instructional activities. Evaluation data suggest that student nutrition awareness, knowledge, and behaviors can be influenced by providing engaging, brief lessons that include posters and lessons. Data also suggest that Linking Lessons are effective way to integrate nutrition education into Physical Education, Health and Social Studies. Minimal differences were found in student outcomes across course disciplines.

NEXT STEPS

• Integration of nutrition topics into Science, Math and English Language Arts with brief interactive Linking Lessons
• Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Linking Lessons when combined with other nutrition education programming in various settings
• Examination of the training needs for school staff who will be implementing the lessons without a nutrition educator present

PARTNERS:

Especially for Physical Educators

Engag E Stud EntS:

now it’s time to complete a survey so we can find out what you learned and what you might be doing differently. Now it’s time to complete a survey so we can find out what you learned and what you might be doing differently. What are some snacks that you think are healthy choices? What are healthy snack options?

What is one change you could make in the future to make more of your snacks healthy ones? Moving toward Behavior Change: What is one change you could make in the future to make more of your snacks healthy ones? Moving toward Behavior Change: What is one change you could make in the future to make more of your snacks healthy ones?

MOVING TOWARD BEHAVIOR CHANGE:

Health Class

Social Studies Class

GOALS

Increase awareness

Awareness of fruits and vegetables with the message that emphasizes that they do not need much preparation, other than washing and maybe peeling or slicing them.

“IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW…” “HELP US LEARN!” “HELP PEOPLE BE AWARE!” “Kids need to learn how to be healthy!” “Some kids don’t know this information.

Participation in Linking Lesson and Pre-Survey: Health, Physical Education, and Social Studies (n=787)

Evaluation data was collected from students at nine low-income high schools (n=, 50% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch rates) in Detroit, Michigan. The mean free/reduced lunch rate of these nine schools was 67% during the 10-11 academic year, mean enrollment size was 5% students per school, and schools taught students in grades 9-12. All schools were also participating in the Detroit Healthy Youth Initiative after-school program, one had a school garden, and four offered open gym time.

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