

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Impact of an Educational Strategy to Increase Nutrition Knowledge, Attitudes, and Consumption Patterns of Fruits and Vegetables among High School Students in a Rural Midwestern Community

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PAGES: 148

The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to determine the impact of five 50-minute experiential lessons developed by the researcher on high school students' knowledge about, attitude toward, and consumption of fruits and vegetables. Subjects in this study included a convenience sample of 41 high school students enrolled in Family and Consumer Sciences classes at Crothersville Junior/Senior High School in Crothersville, Indiana, in the spring semester of 2011. A pretest was given to students in the Adult Roles class (control; n=19) and the Nutrition and Wellness class (treatment; n=22), after which students in the treatment group received five lessons containing additional depth and laboratory experiences where students prepared and tasted various fruits and vegetables. At the conclusion of the lessons, and nine weeks after the unit, the posttest was given to the control and treatment groups. Results indicated the lessons significantly increased students' knowledge compared to the control group (7.8 ± 1.5 vs. 4.6 ± 2.4 , $F=26.27$; $p = 0.000$), and nine weeks after the curriculum test (6.9 ± 2.1 vs. 5.3 ± 2.9 ; $F=4.46$, $p=0.041$), but had a modest impact on these high school students' attitudes toward and consumption of fruits and vegetables.