

Cooking Academy

(Practice-Tested)

Summary of Evaluation Methods

Cooking Academy is a shortened version of 4-H Cooking 101 curricula series. The program is condensed into a seven-lesson curriculum focused on experiential cooking and nutrition education using the Social Cognitive Theory. Each lesson includes an educator preparation and supply checklist, a recipe, and suggested nutrition education resources for discussion and interactive activities. As reported in 2018, a quasi-experiment study was conducted using a student pre/post-test design. Once a week for seven weeks, students were taught how to prepare and cook a recipe ending with a nutrition message related to the recipe. The seven lessons taught were (1) *Introduction: Pre Test* using *Dried Fruit Trail Mix recipe*, (2) *Knife Skills, Food Safety* using *the Black Bean and Vegetable Quesadilla recipe*, (3) *Chop, Sauté* using *Crisp Asian Stir Fry with Brown Rice recipe*, (4) *Measure* using *Delicious Berry French Toast recipe*, (5) *Grate, Mash* using *Colorful Vegetable Pinwheel Wraps recipe*, (6) *Boil, Whisk, Mix* using *Creamy Strove Top Macaroni with Broccoli and Peas recipe*, and (7) *Graduation/Celebration: Post Test* using *Delicious Apple Pie Cups recipe*. The evaluation survey consisted of three knowledge questions, as well as six cooking self-efficacy questions and five healthy habit questions with Likert scale response options (either 5-points – “Always”, “Often”, “Sometimes”, “Once in a while”, “Never”; or 4-points – “Extremely”, “Somewhat”, “Barely”, “Not at all”).

Evaluation Audience

The study evaluated 98 students (between 9-12 years old) from five schools but only 74 students actually completed both pre/post-test. All the schools were low-income sites, primarily Spanish speaking and located in Yolo County.

Curriculum Audience

Cooking Academy is an afterschool, cooking series program targeted for youth in 5th and 6th grade. The recipes used are available in both English and Spanish.

Summary of Evaluation Results

The study findings showed significant increases and improvements in the three outcomes measured (healthy habits, cooking self-efficacy and nutrition knowledge). With a score ranging from 0 to 5, the average student scores increased significantly for both healthy habits (pre-test=3.40; post-test=3.85; $p<.001$) and cooking self-efficacy (pre-test=3.45; post-test=3.73; $p<.001$). Nutrition knowledge was further broken down into three topics and showed significant improvements for each topic. The average student scores increased significantly for MyPlate recognition (pre-test=0.82; post-test=0.91; $p=.002$), food groups (pre-test=3.05; post-test=3.58; $p=.001$), and knowledge of whole grains (pre-test=3.14; post-test=3.86; $p<.001$).

Reference

Asch, A. (2018). Cooking Academy: Increasing Self-Efficacy in Children.

<http://csus-dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.3/207765/Final%20Document%20Thesis%2011-30-2018.pdf?sequence=1>