

Exploration of Gardening Team-building Workshop Interest in High School Athletes

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Background

Many youth are not consuming the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables. Youth who are involved in growing and harvesting their own produce as well as preparing their own meals are more likely to consume the vegetables (Block K. et al, 2012). With the help of our project, we will be able to implement a gardening team building workshop that will expose the student athletes to the health benefits or gardening and consuming raw and fresh vegetables.

Objective

As part of the larger study named the WAVE~Ripples for Change Project, the URAP project aims to design a gardening workshop to increase 14-19 years old high school male and female adolescent athletes' basic gardening skills to support the achievement and maintenance of healthy active lifestyles.

Method and Materials

A literature review using the keywords "gardening, health benefits, and high school athletes" resulted in three related studies. Three key informant interviews were also conducted in person and via the phone to learn about field experts' thoughts on the best practices and recommendations in implementing an age-appropriate gardening workshop to high school adolescents. Based on these findings, a 10-question self-administered paper and pencil survey was developed to understand student's gardening experience and their interest level in participating in a gardening team-building workshop during the Fall Term. This survey is being administered at a current basic cooking team-building workshop of the WAVE Project in May 2016.

WAVE Project Basic Cooking Team Building Workshop

Full Name: _____ Date: _____
 School Name: _____

Instruction: The following questions ask about the vegetable samples you taste and your experience and interest in gardening. *Please circle one answer.*

1. Vegetable Tasting

Vegetable Sample Name	Have you ever tasted the raw/fresh vegetable in front of you? a. Yes b. Not sure c. No	How much did you like it? a. I loved it b. I liked it c. I neither like nor dislike it d. I didn't like it e. I didn't try it	Would you choose this vegetable again? a. Definitely b. Probably c. Probably not d. Definitely not
1. Bell pepper			
2. Zucchini			
3. Spinach			
4. Kale			
5. Radish			
6. Beet			

2. How often do you taste a new vegetable?
 Never/Seldom 1-2 times a month 3-4 times a month 1 or more times a week

3. Will you taste a vegetable if you have never tasted it before?
 Definitely Probably Probably not Definitely not

Why yes or why not?

4. Are you interested in learning where vegetables come from?
 Very interested Interested Not interested at all

5. Have you ever gardened?
 I have a lot of gardening experience I have some gardening experience I have no gardening experience

6. Will you be interested in taking a free gardening class in Fall 2016 to learn more?
 Yes Maybe No

7. Name one strength of your team.

8. Name one new thing you learned about basic cooking today.

9. Did you enjoy the team building workshop?
 I enjoyed it a lot I enjoyed it I did not enjoy it

10. Are there any changes we should make to improve this team-building workshop?



Student participants for the pilot trial of the cooking team building workshop where both the cooking work shop and survey Ashley and I developed were implemented..



Supervisor and mentor, Siew Sun Wong sautéing vegetables that were used in the team building workshop pilot trial and implementation.

Results

As of May 9, 2016, 41 Salem-based participants with the addition of 6 pilot participants have completed the surveys. Preliminary result shows moderate to high interest level of participating in a gardening team-building workshop. The expected outcome of this URAP project is the development of a gardening team building workshop format that will be implemented in the Fall Term. Participants may gain new gardening skills, along with exposure to new, fresh and raw vegetables that they can incorporate into their diet to support healthy living.

Discussion

The current literature on gardening with high school students is limited. Based on successful programs for youth and older adults, the research suggests that students who grow or garden and/or buy local produce and cook their own meals are more inclined to eat their meals and vegetables (Block K. et al, 2012). The exposure of vegetables to growing athletes is essential because high school students consumed high amounts of sugar, trans-fat, and fat in large amounts through mostly processed foods (Initial Assessment Surveys, 2015). Non-nutrient dense foods will not help them achieve optimal health and performance both physically and mentally. Introducing students to gardening and vegetable tastings may empower them to garden and/or to be creative with their meals to support healthy living.

Conclusion

Over the next month we will continue to receive information about the student's vegetable preference, their vegetable consumption, and their interest in a gardening lesson in the Fall. Survey results have informed us about the students' willingness to participate in a gardening workshop. The results show promise to majority of the target schools, but we still have a ways to go and more research to conduct in order to properly implement an effective gardening lesson in the Fall for the student athletes.

References

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