

Audience-Driven Curriculum Design to Enhance Youth and Parent Media Skills and Food Behaviors: Year 2 of 5

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Moving from Curriculum Work Groups to Curriculum

Parents thought of food marketing as "television ads"

Parents concerned about how food marketing encourages mindless eating

Youth repeatedly found food advertisements entertaining and fun to watch

Youth did not think of ads as *media texts* that could be deconstructed and analyzed

Parents were concerned about body images portrayed, but felt the issue should be addressed in a parent-only session to learn how to address it with their children

Youth were very interested in food styling

Parents repeatedly expressed confusion and concern in reading nutrition labels

Parents expressed dissatisfaction with the marketing of highly processed foods which are packed with sugar, salt, and fat; they were unsure how to address this issue with their children at home

Parents expressed repeated concern about stressing fruits and vegetables

Positive responses from the "Go, Slow, and Whoa" framework – it was viewed as simple, realistic, and helpful

Situation and Need

- TV use is a risk factor for children's overweight, *independent of* (sedentary) TV watching.
- Media and marketing are major information sources for children about food, and just 1-2 exposures to food ads influence young children.
- Children as young as 9 yrs and adults can gain media literacy (ML) skills.
- No existing program combines youth and parent nutrition and ML education to combat negative effects of our media-saturated society.

Project: Year 2 of 5-Year USDA-AFRI Grant

Purpose

- To develop a media literacy-based nutrition intervention using a family-based model for families with children 9-14 years of age.

Methods

A non-traditional, audience-driven approach:

- Recap, Year 1: *Focus groups* with youth and parents to identify interests in food, food advertisements, media, and media influence.
- Year 2: *Curriculum Work Groups* lasting several hours each were held with target audience members in series to review, evaluate, and select effective learning and media materials for building media literacy skills in conjunction with improved family nutrition awareness and food behaviors.

Work Group Participants*

WA County	Parents**	Youth	Youth Females	Youth Males	3 rd – 5 th graders	6 th -8 th graders
Chelan/Douglas	13	12	7	5	N	Y
Clark	11	13	9	4	N	Y
Grant	8	8	4	4	Y	N
Pierce	13	11	8	3	Y	N
Spokane	11	11	11	0	N	Y
Total	55	55	39	16	--	--

* Approximately half (56%) of participants were eligible for federal school meal programs. About 70% of participants were Caucasian. Approximately 11% identified as Hispanic.

** All parent participants were female except two. All parent participants were biological mothers or fathers of the youth.

Curriculum Highlights

FoodMania: Kids & Food in a Media-Driven World

- Unit 1**

ML Concepts: Examine a variety of food marketing strategies and practice deconstructing food ads.

Food Behavior Concepts: Explore the use of the GO, SLOW, WHOA framework as a vehicle for examining our diets (foods to eat more frequently; in moderation; less frequently).
- Unit 2**

ML Concepts: Consider images of people and their potential influence on body image. Examine and deconstruct images of food created by food stylists and consider the potential influence of these images.

Food Behavior Concepts: Focus on the importance of making a commitment to eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Unit 3**

ML Concepts: Compare and contrast nutrition labels to the marketing information provided on food product packaging.

Food Behavior Concepts: Analyze nutrition labels for the health aspects of a food product (e.g. fat, sugar and salt).
- Unit 4**

ML Concepts: Explore how food product development incorporates consumer testing, leading to strategies used to advertise the food product.

Food Behavior Concepts: Examine specific strategies involved in creating an appealing food product.
- Unit 5**

ML Concepts: Apply sample marketing strategies to create a campaign designed to influence at least one other person to increase fruit and/or vegetable consumption.

Food Behavior Concepts: Continued focus on integrating fruits and vegetables in the daily diet.
- Unit 6**

Sharing: Identify and share examples of marketing that participants have experienced.

Reflecting: Consider what participants might do to resist mindless eating (i.e. thinking more critically about their food choices).

Exchanging: Review the GO, SLOW, WHOA framework, offering tips and ideas for encouraging healthier choices.

Future Steps

- Year 3**
 - Pilot test the family-based curriculum in the 5 counties
 - Analyze results
- Year 4**
 - Field test the youth- and family-based curricula in the 5 counties
 - Conduct delayed post-tests
- Year 5**
 - Analyze, report, and publish data
 - Train and disseminate in Western region and conferences

This project will encourage partnering of youth and parents as a critical synergy for supporting media management skills and reducing media barriers to healthier food behaviors.

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