

Context Considerations for Developing the *In Defense of Food Nutrition Education Curriculum*

Hiershenee B. Luesse, PhD^{1,2}; Isobel R. Contento, PhD¹

ABSTRACT

Objective: To examine perceptions of teachers and afterschool program staff related to the positive aspects and challenges of afterschool education for youth to guide the development of the “In Defense of Food” nutrition education curriculum.

Methods: Semi-structured in-depth interviews with a convenience sample of teachers and afterschool program staff experienced serving at-risk youth were conducted in New York, NY. They were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using inductive summative content analysis to identify, count, and compare themes.

Results: Interviews (n = 12) generated 2 meta-themes (Pedagogical Elements for Successful Learning and Pragmatic Considerations for hosting health promotion programs in the afterschool context). Learner-centered and tailored approaches and building social connection were considered important for fostering learning in the afterschool context.

Conclusions and Implications: This study emphasizes the importance of considering pedagogical elements related to delivery that minimizes didactic instruction and focuses on learner-centered approaches. Further research is needed to compare outcomes and process measures common approaches used in designing nutrition education curricula with those that have been described in this study.

Key Words: afterschool health education, adolescents, content and delivery, curriculum development, In Defense of Food (*J Nutr Educ Behav.* 2019; 51:370–378.)

Accepted October 13, 2018. Published online December 6, 2018.

INTRODUCTION

Diet-related diseases such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension are emerging in the American population at younger ages than ever before.^{1,2} These emerging health problems are disproportionately impacting minority and low socioeconomic status subgroups, suggesting the need for targeted nutrition education efforts.³ Adolescents are a particularly vulnerable group; they are making more autonomous food-related decisions in a food environment that promotes chronic diet-related disease and are developing behavioral patterns that not only determine their current health status,

but also their risks for developing chronic diseases moving forward.⁴

Although schools are a suitable environment to reach adolescents because they provide extensive and continuous contact,⁵ increasing competition for valuable classroom time has encouraged some researchers to explore the out-of-school space as a forum for health promotion programs.⁶ In recent years, the number of afterschool programs focused on improving dietary intake has increased.^{7–9} However, bringing about behavior change can be difficult, especially without larger systemic changes or policy-wide supports.¹⁰ While comprehensive reviews have found that school-based

interventions overall are effective, the behavior changes have been minimal (producing statistically significant effects, albeit small changes in behavior).^{11,12} This could be because even when nutrition education programs are able to equip youth with the motivations, knowledge, and skills to take healthy actions (employing behavioral change theories, such as the Social Cognitive Theory¹³ or Theory of Planned Behavior¹⁴), youth must still constantly resist the temptations of an obesogenic environment. Other contributing factors might be that programs are developed without adequate acceptance or buy-in of teachers or implementers of the intervention and use ineffective pedagogical approaches.¹⁵

Lessons learned from effective school-based nutrition education programs (such as *Child and Adolescent Trial for Cardiovascular Health [CATCH]*¹⁶ and *Planet Health*¹⁷) point to the importance of involving stakeholders (eg, teachers, site personnel, students, and parents) in the initial developmental stages.¹⁸ Stakeholder

¹Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY

²8RES, LLC, New York, NY

Conflict of Interest Disclosure: The authors have not stated any conflicts of interest.

Address for correspondence: Hiershenee B. Luesse, PhD, 8RES, LLC, Teachers College, Columbia University, 8 West 87th Street, #7, New York, NY 10024; E-mail: hersh@8res.org

© 2018 Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior. Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2018.10.010>

involvement is essential to ensure that programs are practical and acceptable to site implementers,¹⁹ made available to youth, and garner greater environmental/policy supports to help youth continuously make healthy choices.^{10,18} However, even when stakeholders' input was sought, there is little in the nutrition education literature about stakeholders' input on classroom delivery and pedagogical issues. Furthermore, relatively few afterschool nutrition education programs report on program design considerations through stakeholder involvement.^{8,16,20,21} Yet, this is an important launch point in moving theory into practice. That is, there is a gap in knowledge about how teachers and other implementers believe that nutrition education can be effectively delivered using pedagogically sound approaches.

In developing a curriculum (or modifying an existing one), health education curriculum developers and evaluators describe a number of stages that must be completed within a curricular cycle: assessment, design, implementation, and evaluation.^{22,23} Assessment refers to the preliminary stage when one determines the educational message and context for which the program is meant to be developed and delivered. Conducting a curriculum development assessment is an important first step in the development of any new curriculum, usually involving a systematic examination of the state of interest, ability, knowledge, or capacity of stakeholders and the target group involved in the program.^{22–24} In the preliminary stages, an assessment phase can help to identify aspects of program development that are important for its viability in the setting that it is being designed for and to ensure greater effectiveness of the program through its tailored development.²⁵ The principles of the bottom-up approach¹⁹ (used to guide this work) emphasizes the importance of addressing the viable validity (whether the program is practical, affordable, suitable, evaluable, and helpful) when designing or testing a new program. This approach is based on the premise that an assessment of the context (concurrent with determining program effectiveness) is necessary to

ensure the likelihood of program use in its intended setting.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of day-school teachers and afterschool program staff on the positive aspects and challenges of afterschool health promotion for middle school-aged children in an afterschool setting and to understand the pedagogical approaches that they would recommend. In-depth interviews were identified as a suitable means of explorative research to garner in-depth information based on participants' experiences, feelings, and opinions.²⁶ This study was the first step in the curriculum development project that guided the development of the "In Defense of Food" (IDOF) afterschool curriculum.^{27,28} The IDOF curriculum is a 10-week behaviorally focused and theory-driven nutrition education (NE) curriculum based on the work of Michael Pollan^{29,30} and distributed nationally by the Public Broadcasting Service.

METHODS

Recruitment and Enrollment

A convenience sample of participants with a range of experience working in afterschool programs was recruited by the lead investigator through direct outreach via e-mail or telephone from a list of 84 program directors initially generated and provided by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). The DYCD is the largest funder of school- and center-based organizations that serve middle school-aged children in afterschool programming in New York City.³¹ The lead investigator had no established relationship with the participants of this study. Participants were screened for eligibility and invited to participate in the study if they were currently working as a day-school teacher and had at least 1 year of experience teaching middle school-aged children; currently working in an afterschool program setting and had at least 1 year of experience working in that setting; over 18 years of age; and native English speakers. All afterschool program staff were selected from the

nonprofit sector, and worked in DYCD-funded programs, to reflect the majority of urban afterschool programs in New York City.³² Ethical approval for the study involving human participants was provided by Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board (Protocol # 15-221) through expedited review. The participants gave written informed consent to participate before entering the study.

In-Depth Interview Protocol and Data Collection

The lead investigator created an interview script. The content of the questions was informed by standard interview techniques generated through an analysis of the literature^{33,34} and included 6 open-ended questions and probes and follow-up questions. Two expert researchers reviewed the interview script for clarity. Table 1 presents the core questions and probes of the interview protocol.

Interviews were held from March to June 2015 in person when possible, otherwise over the telephone by the lead investigator (female) with experience conducting interviews. Each interview lasted for 45 minutes and began with a short demographic survey (to collect data on age, gender, current position, public or private-sector position, and years of experience in the field). To follow, interviewers provided clarification of the definition of 'nutrition education programs', (defined as "planned educational activities with intended learning objectives related to diet and health") and a brief introduction about the interviewer, and finally, an explanation of the reasons for undertaking this research—which was described to the participants as "to inform the development of a nutrition education program for an afterschool setting with middle school-aged children." All interviews included member checks within the course of the interview for narrative accuracy.

Analysis

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by an outside source. All transcriptions were reviewed along with their audio-recording a

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/13427822>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/13427822>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)