Interprofessional culinary education workshops at the University of Saskatchewan
Ateliers de formation culinaire interprofessionnelle à l'Université de Saskatchewan

Jessica RL Lieffers, Erin Wolfson, Gabilan Sivapatham, Astrid Lang, Alexa McEwen, Marcel F D'Eon and Carol J. Henry

Article abstract
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Interprofessional culinary education workshops at the University of Saskatchewan

Jessica RL Lieffers,1 Erin Wolfson,2 Gabilan Sivapatham,2 Astrid Lang,2 Alexa McEwen,2 Marcel F D’Eon2,3 Carol J Henry1

1College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan, Canada; 2College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan, Canada; 3Medical College of Georgia, Augusta University, Georgia, USA

Correspondence to: Jessica Lieffers PhD RD, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition University of Saskatchewan, 107 Wiggins Road Saskatoon, SK, S7N 5E5; email: jessica.lieffers@usask.ca

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Implication Statement

If you want to offer your students an enjoyable and worthwhile interprofessional activity to learn about issues in community nutrition, your university can cook up these interprofessional culinary education workshops. Start with a few enthusiastic students from various health professional programs who can organize, promote, and lead. Include faculty and/or staff to support the students and apply for internal funding. Find workshop facilitators (e.g., chefs), and arrange for program evaluation. It is best to choose workshop topics and themes relevant to your local situation. Ensure workshops are structured to facilitate cooperative and experiential learning. Students will find these sessions informative, practical, and enjoyable.

Énoncé des implications de la recherche

Les ateliers culinaires sont une activité interprofessionnelle agréable et intéressante que votre université peut proposer aux étudiants qui souhaitent se familiariser avec les enjeux de la nutrition communautaire. Il suffit de réunir, pour commencer, quelques étudiants motivés issus de divers programmes de santé pour organiser, promouvoir et diriger les ateliers. Il s’agit ensuite de trouver les enseignants ou le personnel pour les soutenir, et de s’assurer d’un financement interne. Il faut ensuite trouver des animateurs d’ateliers (par exemple, un chef) et planifier l’évaluation du programme. Il est préférable d’axer les ateliers sur des thèmes adaptés à votre milieu. Les ateliers doivent être structurés de manière à faciliter l’apprentissage coopératif et expérientiel. Les étudiants trouveront ces séances instructives, pratiques et agréables.

Introduction

Culinary education events have grown in popularity in medical education.1,2 They are an appropriate setting for interprofessional education3 where students attend to learn about local issues in and approaches to community nutrition. At the University of Saskatchewan (USask), a steering committee led by students organized and hosted five interprofessional culinary education workshops beginning in January 2018. These workshops provided health professions students with interprofessional learning experiences designed on principles of experiential and cooperative learning4 while preparing affordable meals and learning about important topics in foods and nutrition. In addition, this interprofessional education opportunity provided students opportunities to learn from, with, and
about students from a variety of health professional programs. In this article, we describe the implementation and evaluation of these workshops so that other institutions may consider hosting these as well.

**Intervention**

The workshops were executed as a partnership between two disciplines at USask (medicine and nutrition) and were held in the evening in the USask undergraduate foods laboratory. Funding (average of approximately $500/workshop) was obtained from internal sources (e.g., grants) and the workshops were planned and hosted by students with support from faculty and staff. We advertised through various university channels. Between 15-30 health professional students from various programs (e.g., nutrition, medicine, pharmacy, nursing, dentistry) participated in each 3-hour workshop. Workshop topics included food security and Indigenous foods which are relevant for Saskatchewan. Each workshop began with one or two speakers for 15-30 minutes each (e.g., Elder, food access/security organization staff), followed by a facilitated cooperative cooking activity with an experienced local chef or collective kitchen facilitator. We asked participants to form small groups to prepare one or two different dishes. We encouraged them to work with individuals from programs different from their own and mostly they did work with people they had just met. Diversifying the small groups set up positive interdependence. While participants enjoyed their food, they engaged in a case study activity (e.g. a patient experiencing food insecurity) or game (e.g., Kahoot! quiz to test knowledge gained during the guest speaker presentation) led by student organizers. Both food preparation and the case study/game activities established face-to-face promotive interaction. The workshop was mostly experiential with the group interaction.

**Evaluation**

This program evaluation received an exemption from the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Office. Staff and faculty who supported the students with these events created post-workshop online surveys (FluidSurveys, SurveyMonkey). These surveys comprised of primarily open-ended questions to evaluate the workshops, which provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on their learning. Open ended questions were analyzed using content analysis.

Across the five workshops, 58 attendees completed the post-workshop surveys. Respondent quotes from these workshops are listed in Table 1. We found that students were attracted to attend the workshops for several reasons: topic, cooking, free food, and interprofessional networking and socialization.

Overall, respondents enjoyed these workshops – especially the presentations and hands-on cooking, including the opportunity to work with a chef. They had few suggestions for improvement. Many respondents self-reported increased knowledge of the workshop topics.

Respondents commented on the interprofessional and cooperative aspects of the workshops: they were a good opportunity to meet and work with students from other programs in an informal setting. They also noted that food and cooking helped to break down barriers between programs and make the interaction easier. They felt the workshops provided an opportunity to learn about other programs, scopes of practice, and hear different perspectives. However, a few respondents reported challenges interacting with students they just met while they were busy cooking.

**Conclusion**

Overall, the students who attended the workshops were enthusiastic and reported learning in several areas, including knowledge around the workshop topics and about different health professions. During the workshops, there was a high degree of interaction and cooperation among students from different health professional programs. We encountered challenges such as finding a suitable time for students to participate and finding balance between time for the speakers and the experiential cooking component. We plan to continue hosting these workshops in the coming years (which will include an evaluation of learning outcomes and interprofessional competencies) and hope that other universities will consider hosting their own.
Conflicts of Interest: None.

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References
