


Spring 2018

Reflection and Evaluation of the “Healthy Me, Healthy Earth” After-School Program

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Recommended Citation

Sherman, Mary K., "Reflection and Evaluation of the “Healthy Me, Healthy Earth” After-School Program” (2018). *Honors Theses and Capstones*. 387.

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Reflection and Evaluation of the “Healthy Me, Healthy Earth” After-School Program

Abstract

The “Healthy Me, Healthy Earth” program was an eight week after-school program for first through fourth graders at the Woodman Park Elementary School in Dover, NH conducted during the Fall of 2017. The program used a cost-effective, food system-based curriculum to promote health and environmental literacy to students who participated. An interdisciplinary approach was used to assess the knowledge, attitude, and behavioral changes of the students. There was a noted improvement in comprehension of food system concepts.

Keywords

after-school program, agriculture education, agriculture, sustainability, education, elementary education

Subject Categories

Agricultural Education | Curriculum and Instruction | Early Childhood Education | Other Nutrition

Abstract

The “Healthy Me, Healthy Earth” program was an eight week after-school program located in Dover, NH that ran from September 2017 to November 2017. The program utilized a food-systems based curriculum to evaluate the knowledge and health literacy of the students grades one through four who attended this after-school program. The curriculum design is cost-effective and can be easily replicated in various educational settings. Objectives relating to nutrition, environment, agriculture, sustainability, and student behavior were measured throughout the duration of this program using the knowledge-attitude-behavior model. The data was studied through a mix of qualitative and quantitative content analyses. The project faced various challenges relating to student behavior, program management, school closures, and program duration. There were noted improvements in student willingness to try new foods and ability to explain the nutritional quality of their favorite foods. There was also a greater desire to learn about environmentalism and sustainability from the students after the completion of the program. The “Healthy Me, Healthy Earth” program was effective in reaching its overarching goals and can be used as a tool for educators to use in their own lesson plans. This curriculum can be adapted to various settings, such as in-class lessons and clubs, which can help further the mission of creating a healthier, more sustainable world.