

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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UI FCS Extension Trains Teachers at Five AITC Workshops

The Situation

The University of Idaho (UI) Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) Extension Educators have a long-standing collaboration with elementary, middle, and high schools. FCS extension educators are often asked to teach nutrition, food safety, and food resource management classes.

In Idaho there are 23 FCS extension educators and 653 schools. One way to reach more students is to train teachers on UI curricula. In Idaho, Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC), a program coordinated by the United States Department of Agriculture, provides teacher workshops each summer to help them gain a greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society, so that they may become citizens who support wise agricultural policies.

Rick Waitley, State Director of AITC in Idaho, requested that the two authors (Martha Raidl and Rhea Lanting) of the UI published *Got Calcium?* curriculum train teachers enrolled in the five AITC workshops in summer 2007.

Our Response

Funding was obtained from a UI Extension Critical Issues grant (\$3,000), and from the United Dairymen of Idaho (\$3,000) in order to provide each teacher attending the five workshops with a copy of the curriculum plus supplementary materials. Workshops were held in Meridian, Nampa, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, and Weiser.

The *Got Calcium?* curriculum was originally designed for 3rd and 4th graders. Since the AITC workshop included Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade teachers, the training was designed so that teachers of all grade levels could incorporate this information into their classroom.

Teachers viewed selected powerpoint slides from each of the four lessons that illustrated the importance of calcium in the diet, factors involved in building strong bones (diet and exercise), food sources of calcium (dairy and non-dairy), and how to increase the calcium content of their diet. Additional materials that helped illustrate these main concepts were the: Death of a Bone model, flour bags illustrating calcium content of their bones at various age groups, Dairy Council food models, food labels, and menus.

Teachers participated in five hands-on activities from the lessons; (1) Naming bones of the body, using sticky notes, (2) Finding calcium on the food label, (3) Incorporating a physical activity called Mr. Bone into the classroom, (4) Selecting calcium-rich foods from a Café Calcium menu, and (5) Taste-testing a yogurt parfait. They also provided input on how the information and activities could be adapted for a variety of age groups.

Program Outcomes

Demographic information and teaching experience data were collected on the teachers and they were asked to evaluate various components of the *Got Calcium?* curriculum.

Table 1 lists the gender information. There were 177 teachers that attended the workshop; 76% were female and 13% were male.

Table 1. Gender information

Total # of teachers	Female (%)	Male (%)
177	154 (76%)	23 (13%)

Table 2 shows that the majority (64%) of teachers attending the workshop were elementary school teachers.

Table 2. Grade level of teachers

Grade level	Percent of Teachers
Pre-K and K	10%
Grades 1-8 (elementary)	64%
Grades 9-12 (high school)	26%

Teachers evaluated the main concepts covered in each of the lessons and the activities, using a five point scale, (where one was the lowest and five was the highest rating). Table 3 shows that teachers gave the *Got Calcium?* curriculum high ratings in covering the main calcium concepts (4.7-4.9/5.0) and the hands-on activities (4.5-4.9/5.0).

Table 3. Evaluation of main calcium concepts and activities in the *Got Calcium?* curriculum

Main Calcium Concepts	Scale
Food sources of calcium	4.7
Bones of the body	4.8
Calcium on the food label	4.9
Incorporate calcium into meals	4.7
Hands-on Activity	Scale
Physical activity (called Mr. Bone)	4.6
Naming the bones (called the Sticky Note activity)	4.9
Calcium on the food label	4.7
Calcium on the menu	4.5
Tasting a yogurt parfait	4.8

Participant comments: Approximately 80% of the teachers wrote that they would incorporate the Sticky Note or bone labeling activity into the classroom. The photo illustrates how the teachers used the sticky notes to label bones on each other.



Impact: It is estimated that if each of the 177 teachers uses just one lesson from the *Got Calcium?* curriculum and there is an average of 30 students/class, then 5,310 students will learn the importance of calcium in the diet.

Students who increase the calcium content of their diet will develop strong bones and be less likely to experience a bone fracture. If they continue this practice, then they will decrease their likelihood of developing osteoporosis.

For More Information

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