

**Educator Survey
for
Child Nutrition Education Modules**



National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi

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National Food Service Management Institute The University of Mississippi

Building the Future Through Child Nutrition

PURPOSE

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) was authorized by Congress in 1989 and established in 1990 at The University of Mississippi in Oxford. The Institute operates under a grant agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

The purpose of NFSMI is to improve the operation of Child Nutrition Programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination. The Administrative Offices and Divisions of Technology Transfer and Education and Training are located in Oxford. The Division of Applied Research is located at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

MISSION

The mission of the National Food Service Management Institute is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of Child Nutrition Programs.

VISION

The vision of the National Food Service Management Institute is to be the leader in providing education, research, and resources to promote excellence in Child Nutrition Programs.

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Educator Survey for Child Nutrition Education Modules

Executive Summary

To help guide National Food Service Management Institute strategic planning and development of educational materials targeting potential Child Nutrition Program professionals, a survey of nutrition and foods educators nationwide was conducted to validate titles and preferred teaching methods. Surveys were mailed to 316 nutrition and foods faculty from two- and four-year programs nationwide. Of the 316 surveys mailed, 103 were returned (32.6%). All respondents stated that they presently cover topics related to child nutrition in their curriculum, and 85% stated they would purchase educational materials if available. The top five module titles with preferred teaching method are shown below.

Rank	Module title	Preferred teaching method
1.	The multifaceted nature of child nutrition programs: An introduction	Video
2.	Menu planning and purchasing for child nutrition programs	Interactive CD
3.	Introduction to US Department of Agriculture policies and regulations for child nutrition programs	Video
4.	Marketing school meal programs to school officials, teachers, parents, and community leaders	Video
5.	Financial management: how do child nutrition programs differ from other foodservice operations?	Lesson plans

Educator Survey for Child Nutrition Education Modules

Introduction

In the early 1990s, National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) Applied Research Division (ARD) conducted research that indicated by the early years of the 21st century there would be substantial turnover of child nutrition professionals due to retirement, thus creating a market for employment in Child Nutrition Programs (CNP). Additional research conducted by ARD on knowledge and skills of directors and managers showed multi-dimensional skills are needed by directors and managers in CNP. Given the impact these two variables have on CNP, NSFMI recognized the need to provide resources to educators of future CNP managers and directors. To help guide NFSMI strategic planning and development of educational materials to assist educators in the fields of nutrition and hospitality, a study was conducted. The study consisted of a focus group held in November 1999 with nutrition and foods and hospitality faculty from two- and four-year programs. Because this meeting was held several years ago and the market for these materials may have changed, in January 2004, a survey was conducted to validate the continued interest in these topics. The results of the 1999 focus group served as the foundation of the survey.

Methodology

Instrument

The 1999 focus group meeting generated eight topics for educational materials. They are as follows:

- The child as the customer
- Overall orientation or introduction to school nutrition programs
- Politics of school nutrition programs
- Profile of a star
- Business modeling skills
- Catering and food factories
- Marketing principles, internal and external
- Negotiation skills

Using these eight topic areas, a three-part mail survey was developed. The first two questions asked participants to answer yes or no to:

“Presently, do you include topics related to child nutrition in your curriculum?”

“If educational materials were made available for teaching relevant content to potential child nutrition professionals, would you purchase them?”

The next group of questions asked participants to rank 13 educational modules according to value as teaching resources on a 1= least valuable to 5= most valuable scale. The final section on the survey asked participants to identify the most useful presentation format for each of the educational modules. The selection options included video, interactive CD, lesson plan, case study, and reference list. The cover letter for the survey is found in Appendix A and the survey in Appendix B.

Sample

The sample consisted of 316 nutrition and foods faculty from two- and four-year American Dietetic Association accredited programs nationwide. To have similar but representative size samples from each group in the population of nutrition and foods accredited programs, all members of the Coordinated Dietetic programs (50) and Dietetic Technician programs (69) were mailed surveys along with a random sample from the Didactic Dietetics programs (91) and Dietetic Internship programs (106).

Results

The methodology for this study was approved by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee. Of the 316 surveys mailed, 103 were returned within the specified time frame and three were returned after analysis was conducted. This represents a return rate of 32.6%. Over 46% of the respondents were faculty in Didactic Dietetics programs. Table 1 shows a breakdown by program classification.

Table 1

Response by Program Classification

Program classification	Frequency	Percent
Didactic dietetic programs	48	46.6
Coordinated dietetics programs	11	10.7
Dietetic internship programs	25	24.3
Two-year dietetic technician programs	17	16.5
Two-year nutrition/foods/hospitality programs	1	1.0
Missing	1	1.0
Total	103	100.0

Of those returning the survey, 100% indicated that they include in the curriculum topics related to child nutrition programs. When asked, “If educational materials were made available for teaching relevant content to potential child nutrition professionals, would you purchase them?” 85% indicated they would.

Of the 13 educational modules, participants indicated the most valuable were:

- The multifaceted nature of child nutrition programs: an introduction
- Menu planning and purchasing for child nutrition programs

- Introduction to US Department of Agriculture policies and regulations for child nutrition programs
- Marketing school meal programs to school officials, teachers, parents, and community leaders
- Financial management: how do child nutrition programs differ from other foodservice operations?

Table 2 shows complete survey results in descending order of mean score.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Educational Module in Descending Order

Question	N	Mean^a	Standard deviation
The multifaceted nature of child nutrition programs: an introduction	103	4.04	1.08
Menu planning and purchasing for child nutrition programs	101	3.95	.98
Introduction to US Department of Agriculture policies and regulations for child nutrition programs	103	3.63	1.16
Marketing school meal programs to school officials, teachers, parents, and community leaders	102	3.63	1.04
Financial management: how do child nutrition programs differ from other foodservice operations?	103	3.60	1.16
Catering and food factories: changing role of school meal programs	102	3.50	1.05
Profile of a star: what makes a successful manager/director?	103	3.48	1.17
Visibility and communication: two keys for influencing others	102	3.41	1.02
Negotiating skills for child nutrition professionals	103	3.40	1.22
The importance of working as a team	103	3.34	1.10
Child as a customer	100	3.26	1.26
How to network with other professionals	103	3.09	1.13
The history and philosophy of child nutrition and child and adult care feeding programs	103	2.78	1.20

^a scale 1=least valuable to 5=most valuable

The most preferred teaching method for the modules was video. Complete results of the preferred teaching methods are shown in Table 3 by descending order for video preference.

Table 3

Preferred Teaching Method for Educational Modules

Educational module	Video	Interactive CD	Lesson plans	Case study	Reference list
Child as a customer	47	13	15	13	7
The multifaceted nature of child nutrition programs: an introduction	38	24	32	3	1
Negotiating skills for child nutrition professionals	37	21	13	20	3
Catering and food factories: changing role of school meal programs	36	21	24	11	3
Visibility and communication: two keys for influencing others	35	18	22	15	4
The history and philosophy of child nutrition and child and adult care feeding programs	32	11	19	1	30
Introduction to US Department of Agriculture policies and regulations for child nutrition programs	30	22	27	2	19
The importance of working as a team	30	21	10	29	3
How to network with other professionals	30	17	22	14	10
Marketing school meal programs to school officials, teachers, parents, and community leaders	28	22	21	23	3
Profile of a star: what makes a successful manager/director?	27	23	8	34	3
Financial management: how do child nutrition programs differ from other foodservice operations?	9	30	38	19	3
Menu planning and purchasing for child nutrition programs	7	38	35	12	4

The preferred teaching method of the top five most valuable modules is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Most Preferred Teaching Method for Top Five Educational Modules

Rank	Educational module	Preferred teaching method
1.	The multifaceted nature of child nutrition programs: an introduction	Video
2.	Menu planning and purchasing for child nutrition programs	Interactive CD
3.	Introduction to US Department of Agriculture policies and regulations for child nutrition programs	Video
4.	Marketing school meal programs to school officials, teachers, parents, and community leaders	Video
5.	Financial management: how do child nutrition programs differ from other foodservice operations?	Lesson plans

References

Gregoire, M., & Sneed, J. (1993). Continuing education needs of district school nutrition directors/supervisors. *School Food Service Research Review* 18, 16-22.

Rainville, A.J., & Carr, D. (2001). *Competencies, knowledge, and skill statements for district school nutrition directors/supervisors*. University MS: National Food Service Management Institute.

Appendix A

Appendix A

Sample Survey Cover Letter

January 5, 2004

Dear _____,

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) is a center established by Congress in 1989 for the purpose of conducting applied research, education, and technical assistance to improve the general operation and quality of Child Nutrition Programs (CNP).

The National School Lunch Program feeds over 28 million students daily in over 99,000 schools and residential child care institutions and the National Breakfast Program feeds over 8 million students in 75,000 schools and child care institutions. School meal operations are now beginning to experience the impact of a long-predicted retirement boom, as experienced school foodservice directors step down. Child nutrition programs are experiencing difficulty in filling manager and director positions with qualified individuals. Recruitment of a skilled labor force and CNP professionals with experience in nutrition and foods, dietetics, or foodservice management will be essential. Exposing students to areas of child nutrition could spark an interest in this profession. Great opportunities exist in the child nutrition job market for your students.

NFSMI is in the process of developing a variety of educational materials that can be used by educators in child nutrition related fields. These modules will make teaching specifics of the child nutrition programs easy for instructors and learning these concepts enjoyable for students. We need your assistance to identify topics areas for these education modules. Please take five minutes from your busy schedule to complete the enclosed survey and return in the provided envelope by **January 23, 2004**.

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, Box 5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406, (601) 266-6820.

Return of this survey indicates voluntary participation. Thank you for assisting with this project.

Sincerely,

Mary Kay Meyer, PhD, RD
Senior Research Scientist

Appendix B
