

Session 2.2b

Learning research skills (and others) by doing research: The onion project (full of layers)

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Abstract

Research methodology teaching is a common component of many undergraduate programmes. This has been adapted within the Department of Clinical Sciences and Nutrition for the teaching of human nutrition and nutrition and dietetic students to incorporate live research investigating the estimation of portion sizes of common foods.

This concept was developed following feedback from employers and placement providers regarding our students and the need to further develop these skills. Estimation of food portion size is a key skill, along with teaching others aspects of food and health. A skeleton research trial was developed by the academic team, with the details of the conduct of the study and teaching the responsibility of the students.

Following gaining faculty ethical permission, a process shared with the students, students developed the research project as a randomised controlled study comparing photographs of food with real portions of foods for the teaching of portion sizes. This involved a pre-education quiz of a random sample of food portions, before an education followed up with a post-education quiz two weeks later.

Issues around confounding factors and missing data from students not engaging in the project were considered, and seen as an advantage as these would add further depth to the data, allowing for greater development of a scientific discussion.

This project designed to teach research methods through, but through its many layers (like an onion) it has worked with students to develop their subject specific skills of portion estimation and teaching skills through the teaching of their peers.

Presenter details

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Student cohort representative: First point of contact for students to represent how they engaged as producers in this project. Phill Johnston (1102230@chester.ac.uk), Katherine McKenna (1113790@chester.ac.uk) and David Thomas (1105016@chester.ac.uk). All are currently 2nd year students studying either Human Nutrition or Nutrition and Dietetics.