

**C&I as a Tool to Elicit Change in Health**

AOKI JM.

Department of Natural Sciences, University of Houston-Downtown; Houston, Texas

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ABSTRACT

**Background:** American has become obesogenic and the trend of people gaining weight is a continuing problem. **Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to describe an action research modified C&I (curriculum and instruction) unit on health in an upper-level university life science course for EC-6 and 4-8 pre-service teachers that elicited change in student knowledge and lifestyle of health. **Methods:** A phenomenological approach using a constant comparative method was used to describe the post-unit responses from teacher candidates. A one group pre-test post-test design was utilized to as the experimental design. Prior to the health unit a pre-test was given to 115 students. The health unit was taught using a curriculum and instruction based on a solid theoretical framework supported by a variety of pedagogical approaches (didactic, hands-on, team work, and interactive online) or high impact learning experiences over a four week period. A post-test was administered to the 115 students approximately two weeks after the health unit (or about six weeks after the pre-test). **Results:** There was a statistically significant difference ( $T = -23.15, P < .0001$ ) between the mean pre-test and post-test scores. Qualitative analysis indicated that 36% of the students indicated that the unit was Enjoyable/Fun/Interesting. This was followed by Informative (29% of the students) and Realization/Awareness/Discovery (26% of the students). Further analysis revealed that nearly all the students discovered that their eating habits were poor and that very few exercise or exercise on a regular basis. In addition, the students indicated that the curriculum and instruction was motivating. Moreover, the students stated that the classroom experiences from the health unit have instilled a desire to stress the importance of healthy eating and exercise to their future students. **Conclusions:** The results suggest that there was a statistically, significant increase in student achievement of health knowledge and student affect was positively impacted by the curriculum and instruction. The researcher concluded that the combination of content acquisition and positive student affect due to high impact learning experiences led to lifestyle and behavior changes as

reported by these students. Furthermore, these students planned on teaching the significance of developing healthy behaviors to their students.

KEY WORDS: Education, Health, Lifestyle, Pre-Service Teacher