

# Educating Low Country Food Bank Agencies on the Importance of Nutrition through an Integrative Curriculum

Carrie Alderman, Lisa Beatty, Duncan Berry, Amy Foster, Daniel Grass, Molly Hurst, Hailey James, Richard McKinney, Ashekia Pinckney, Dana Mitchel

## Introduction

The purpose of this project was to provide sustainable nutrition knowledge among agencies and clients in the Tricounty area impacted by the Lowcountry Food Bank (LCFB). The Lowcountry Food Bank is a nonprofit agency located in North Charleston that serves as a distribution center for more than 320 smaller relief agencies serving low-income clients along the South Carolina coast. The LCFB accepts food item donations from corporations, individuals, the government. LCFB also provides education on nutritious and economical recipes in order for agencies to distribute to their clients.

By working with the LCFB's Nutrition Educator we were able to identify the need for a Nutrition Education class that would be designed and provided for representatives of the smaller agencies when they first present to the LCFB. We would be able to impact a much larger group as these representatives take back their new knowledge to the clients they serve.



**Figure 1.** Lowcountry Food Bank Agency Distributing Center

The topics covered in the Nutrition Education class would provide nutrition education materials and recipes for the agencies to distribute to their clients. The USDA My Plate method has been studied and adopted as the national nutrition standard, so we chose to base the lesson plan for our class upon this model.

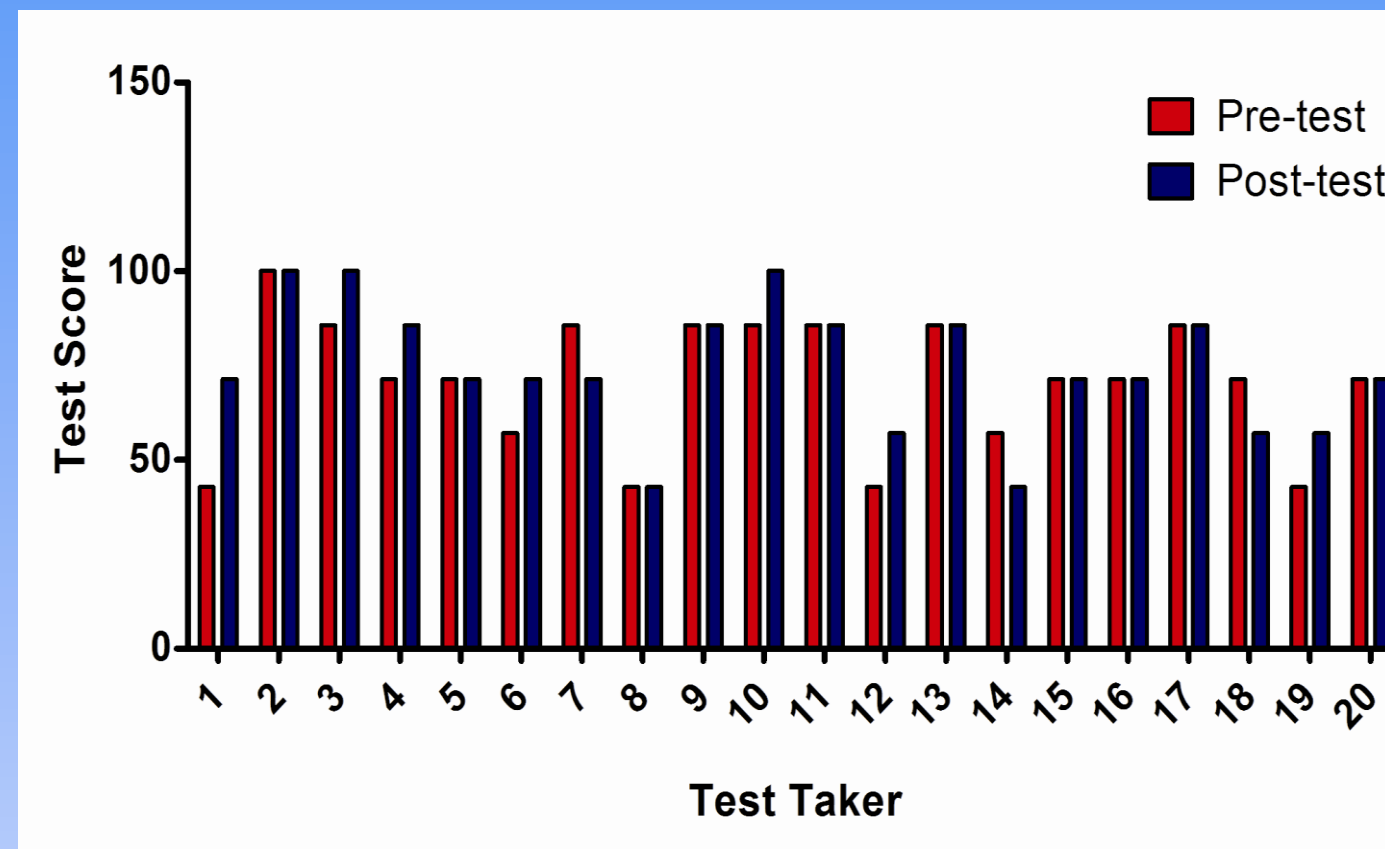
## Methods

- We partnered with the Lowcountry Food Bank
- The presentation was set up in three units: nutrition, portions, and creative shopping
- A pre- and post-test was administered to Agency directors evaluating information taught
- The pre -and post-tests were identical, with the addition of one question in the post test asking the participant if he or she found the class helpful
- The results of the study (pre-test compared to the post -test results) were documented



**Figure 2.** Molly Hurst Presenting the Integrative Curriculum

## Results



**Graph 1.** Comparison of Pre and Post Test Results

**Analysis of test results before and after presentation of nutrition curriculum.** Each individual took a pre-test consisting of seven questions. Following the pre-test, each individual listened to the prepared nutrition curriculum lecture, which covered topics asked on the pre-test. Following the lecture each individual took a post-test, which was identical to the pre-test. The mean test scores for the pre- and post- test were evaluated for statistical significance by employing a paired Student's t-test assuming equal variances. A p-value <0.05 was considered significant. Our results indicated a p-value of 0.1713, which was not considered significant.



**Figure 3.** One Participant's Myplate Example

## Community Outreach



**Chart 1.** Diagram of the Lowcountry Food Bank Outreach

## Discussion

Creating a curriculum and measuring the impact of the curriculum on agency representatives was done in efforts to influence the agency representatives' purchasing behavior. The intent was to first educate the agency representatives so that they can provide healthier options for their clients and also advise their clients on how to eat well-balanced meals. This curriculum is the first step in the process of creating a healthier community.

Attendees clearly expressed their appreciation for the nutrition class, but the pre and posttests did not fully capture the lessons learned. One recommendation for future testing would be to restructure the questions to be more objective.



**Figure 4.** Participants of the Integrative Curriculum Presentation

The Lowcountry Food Bank was an excellent community partner that is making a significant positive impact on fighting hunger, joblessness, and childhood obesity. They would be a great community partner for next year's scholars.