



HEALTHY STUDENTS BETTER LEARNERS

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There's an old saying that a healthy mind resides in a healthy body. It has also been scientifically proven that nutritious food is directly related to children's intellectual development. Any deficiency of vitamins or other nutrients can not only affect their physical health, but also their concentration, comprehension, and retention of learning. It is essential, therefore, to understand health & nutrition as an important factor affecting students' learning outcomes, and must be included in students' holistic development plan. Through the activity presented in 'Healthy Student, Better Learners', teachers have found an engaging way to foster health and hygiene habits in students.

Names of the innovators

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Benefits of this innovation

- ◆ Students get a healthy diet for better physical and mental development.
- ◆ They become aware of the importance, quality and source of various nutrients in food.
- ◆ General knowledge of the students also increases.
- ◆ Parents also gradually become more sensitive towards the child's health and hygiene requirements, and are able to better support their growth.

Impact areas

Create enquiry-led self-learning environment; Improve motivation levels among teachers; Increase involvement of parents in their child's education; Improve learning outcomes.

Summary

The aim of various activities explained here is to motivate students to always choose to eat nutritious food and improve their eating habits. In this innovation, the food is used as a TLM to increase their subject, general and practical knowledge. It also serves to develop their communication skills and enhance vocabulary.

Activity for classroom

What's Inside Your Tiffin?

Introduction: It is seen that children are in a joyful mood just before the lunch break. Teacher can use this time to have a light-hearted discussion on nutritional value of food in their lunch boxes. In this way, students become aware of the different types of foods and their significance. They can also be asked to make a note of the food items they are consuming and the nutrients present in them for a period of seven days. After this period, they are asked to present the findings in the class. This exercise helps

them learn about seasonal and local foods and their importance in a healthy diet, along with personal hygiene habits.

Classroom Application: Students gradually acquire better eating and cleanliness habits, leading to less sick-days off from school and also more active participation in class. This activity is suitable for students of higher classes, who are not served the mid-day-meals at school.

Planning: Inform the class that now everyday for 10 minutes (or more) before the lunch break, there will be a discussion in class about the food in their lunch boxes and its nutritional value.

Preparation: To be able to facilitate this discussion in the classroom, the teacher needs to have basic understanding of the components of a balanced diet, and knowledge of the seasonal and local produce.

Implementation: This activity can be conducted in the class every day, as follows:

- ◆ The food that students bring in their tiffin boxes daily is used as a TLM to help them learn something new about health every day. Students take turns to show the contents of their lunch boxes and share some information about it. It could be their preferences (why they have brought this particular item today, whether they like it or not, etc.) or factual information (this vegetable grows in summers, my mother says it is good for a bad throat, etc.).

- ◆ Teachers inform each child about the nutrients present in his/her food, and let's them decide if their (or their mother's) choice of food today was wise or not.

- ◆ They also encourage children to eat healthy food, along with food-related hygiene. For instance, wash vegetables with clean water before chopping, wash lentils and pulses at least three times before boiling, wash hands with soap before and after eating food, eat with your mouth closed, and so on.

- ◆ In addition, students are also explained the benefits of different types of cooking methods, which they share with mothers at home. For instance, always cook the food with the lid closed, deep frying can damage the nutrients, spicy food is difficult to digest, and other similar tips.

- ◆ Parents can also be asked to participate in these discussions occasionally, to increase their awareness on healthy food requirements for a growing child. ■

