Micro Lesson #4 Reflection

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**Goals**

 The idea of teaching outside my comfort zone was anything but comforting. Once the actual micro teaching took place, I was pleasantly surprised with how well the lesson went! My goals for the external teaching lesson were based on FCS Competencies and Standards and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Position Papers. Timing Nutrition discussed the effects of food and nutrients on health and peak performance of athletes. This directly linked to my first goal of the external lesson which was based off FCS Standard & Competency 14.2.1. In addition, I tied in my lesson to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ Position Papers, Nutrition and Athletic Performance and Total Diet Approach to Healthy Eating, into my lesson for the lacrosse players. Timing Nutrition teaches athletes how to time protein, carbohydrates, and fat for optimal physical performance. The emphasis of the lesson focused on using a total diet approach for improving performance and included snack and meal examples, explaining the primary macronutrients of one’s diet. Timing Nutrition explains logically why certain foods are better consumed pre-workout, during workout, or post-workout for athletic performance and energy.

**Climate/Environment**

The climate for this sports nutrition lesson was a very fitting atmosphere. I decided a classroom setting would be best environment because student athletes would be more apt to learn in a classroom versus a place where they meet for practice. What better way to be in the mindset of learning than to be in a classroom? The classroom was appropriate for my duties as the instructor as well. In order to use the PowerPoint slides designed for Timing Nutrition, it required a laptop, projector, and speakers for the video on carbohydrates.

It was hard to know what kind of interaction to expect, knowing myself to be initially, fairly shy, and for athletes to predictably be the opposite. To my surprise, there was quite a bit of interaction between myself and the lacrosse players. After my initial introduction, the PowerPoint began with a video on the importance of carbohydrates for athletic performance presented by a male dietitian. My intent was to appeal to the audience by including advice from someone who would be likeable and that would serve as a comparable model for them. Later on in my feedback, I was pleased to see that many of the players liked that I included this video and tied it into my lesson.

Another strategy I use to keep the lacrosse players’ attention was using humor. In my PowerPoint I included funny quotes from the movie *Anchorman*, a quotable comedy that most peers I know have seen numerous times. For example, in my “Common mistakes” slide, overdoing protein before a workout was a common mistake because carbohydrates are better quick fuel for pre-workout, and are less likely to cause stomach discomfort during a workout. To turn this fact from boring to something humorous that they’d likely remember, I used a captioned photo from *Anchorman*, with the main character Ron Burgundy dramatically wailing, “Milk was a bad choice!” I realized this tactic worked well, as I heard many laughs from the crowd recognizing the quote and heard side conversations on the subject matter of protein.

Another way I felt a strong interaction between myself and the audience, was through the questions that came up. This showed me the engagement of the audience, and I did my best to clearly answer their questions regarding the lesson.

**Content**

 Timing Nutrition was appropriate for the lacrosse players because it taught them ways to use the foods they eat to best fuel their workout routine. For those players that needed examples of fueling snacks, I tried to provide many examples but I tried to explain that the list was a starting point, and they could use these general guidelines to eat the foods they enjoyed. This, of course, came with encouragement to choose mostly wholesome foods over constantly shoveling large amounts of highly processed snacks and chips. It seemed that the athletes took well to this approach, although I had one comment on my feedback suggesting otherwise. One student suggested I include foods to “never eat”. This of course, is not my way of going about making recommendations. I empathize that sometimes people like being told exactly what to eat in order to meet their goals, but I feel that saying “never” gives a negative vibe to the lesson itself.

**Strategies**

 I thought humor was a great way to lighten up the learning environment. Humor made this lesson better because it grabbed the learners’ attention, started side discussions about the subject matter, and predictably caused the information to be more memorable when associated with a laughable moment. Another strategy that worked well was using men in my verbal and PowerPoint examples and often comparing men’s needs to women’s needs, or to a non-athletic person’s needs. Giving students a comparison to go by can help to create a frame of reference, and helped me better explain why their caloric needs would differ compared to others. Using a male dietitian in the carbohydrates video at the beginning of the lesson also set the tone for the lesson. The subconscious message was, it’s not just girls interested in nutrition, guys use nutrition to build muscle and stay healthy too!!

 Although there is always room for improvement, I did not come across any strategies that did not work well in this particular lesson. By using humor, likeable role models, and a frame of reference for the athletes, I believe I did my best at matching their needs for Timing Nutrition.

**Assessment**

 At the end of the slideshow, I assessed the athletes’ knowledge of pre-workout, during workout, and post-workout food choices by giving them a quiz with pictures included. This seemed to work well by assessing their ability to critically think about what foods would work best and why. The first outcome of this lesson was that students will be able to name the appropriate time ranges to consume pre-workout, during workout, and post-workout meals or snacks. I verbally assessed this at the end of the slides, and got correct answers for all three using class collaboration. The next outcome was for the students to be able to identify what food combinations fit it which timing category. This was assessed by the PowerPoint quiz after the lesson ended. The quiz was a good indicator of who was listening, and I received explanations why it would be best for that particular category. This showed me that they really understood the lesson. The third outcome of the Timing Nutrition lesson had the athletes tie together carbohydrates to a perceived benefit. This question was not intended to be memorization of a PowerPoint slide, but rather about developing a deeper sense of appreciation for the use of carbohydrates for energy in athletic performance. Last but not least, the forth outcome was that students would collaboratively think of one benefit of consuming protein within 30 minutes post-workout. I wanted them to be able to differentiate the benefits of carbohydrates and protein from an athletic performance standpoint. By the end of the class period, all objectives were successfully met. Some objectives required team work to acquire answers, but the boys did a fine job and I was very pleased as the instructor at their participation and motivation to learn.

**Personal/Professional**

 Improving one’s teaching skills requires practice and reflection. If I could change anything about my lesson, it would be including more examples of post-workout meals/snacks. I could also use the foods the students listed at the beginning of class to make a pre- or post- workout meal. This would be an effective strategy because it uses foods they eat often, whereas my examples were general examples that may have been bias because due to my own food preferences. Another way I could have improved this lesson was to have more time for discussion in between slides. Although I explained my slides and asked if anyone had questions in between, I felt that I was flipping through them quicker than I anticipated.

There are several areas of my teaching skills that are far from perfect. A few skills that would further my development as a teacher is increasing my confidence level prior to the lesson and continuing to ask for feedback from learners as a way to improve learning and to understanding of individual learning styles. For me, the worst part of the lesson was the anticipation of the lesson. The lesson itself was not painful at all. This experience really increased my confidence for public speaking because it took me away from my comfort zone of teaching in front of other dietetics majors and put me in a totally opposite environment, teaching a bunch of guys! Even when leaving your comfort zone is less than comfortable, there are many benefits to stepping into territory that you’ve never stepped before.