

Community Nutrition Paraprofessional Training Library

Title	WNEP – Independent Study Course
Producer	University of Wisconsin – Cooperative Extension – Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program
Date produced	Newest revision completed November 2009
Cost	Materials are available for free on the WNEP Website
How to obtain resource: Name, Phone, Email, Address, Website	http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/train/index.cfm
General Description	The WNEP-Independent Study Course is one part in a comprehensive training program used by WNEP to develop paraprofessional nutrition educators. It consists of an orientation on Learner Centered Education followed by 10 units covering the main themes emphasized in EFNEP and SNAP-Ed. Assigned readings come from <i>ADA Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, From Telling to Teaching</i> , as well as a number of documents produced by USDA nutrition programs. In addition, the course incorporates many of the resources WNEP has created to support their clients and educators in the field. In terms of homework, each lesson has activities that get the learner familiar with resources they will use with clients. These activities involve self reflection, observations, interviews and connecting to the real world. Open ended questions are also used to stimulate thought throughout the course. This curriculum is reinforced with regular face-to-face meetings with their supervisor. In addition, paraprofessionals are required to attend two three-day conferences, job shadow and attend many other WNEP trainings. Although it is an independent study course, the design incorporates activities that support adult-centered learning.
Date Reviewed	September 1, 2010
Reviewer Name	Jagan Butler, Kari Bachman, Peggy Martin, Rachael Leon Guerrero , Connie Schneider

Format (check all that apply):

- DVD
- CD-ROM
- Video
- Booklet
- Fact Sheet
- Game
- Poster
- Curriculum
- PowerPoint Slides
- Web Site
- Web Training
- Written training module or outline

Other:

Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity Topics Covered (check all that apply)

- Physical Activity
- Meal Planning
- Food Resource management
- Food Preparation
- MyPyramid
- Dietary Guideline for Americans
- Portion Sizes
- Vegetarian Diets
- Food Safety
- Grains/Whole Grains
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Dairy
- Meat and Beans
- Fats and Oils
- Carbohydrates
- Sodium and Potassium
- Reducing fat and/or sugar and salt
- Calories
- Vitamins and Minerals
- Other (please list)

Core Competency Topics Covered (check all that apply)

- Understand the Land Grant University System
- Time Management
- Diversity/ Cultural Competence/ Civil Rights
- Recruiting Participants
- Planning Lessons
- Collecting Data
- 24-Hour Recall
- Writing Success Stories
- Working with Volunteers
- Developing and/or maintaining partnerships
- Use of logos, disclaimers, state program-specific graphic identity standards
- Technology literacy
- Ethics
- Child Protection
- Other (please list)

Consider the criteria listed in each section when reviewing the materials. Criteria

Content

- Content appropriate to paraprofessional
- Goals and objectives consistent with EFNEP program policies
- Materials are error free (Typo's, sentence structure, hearsay ie: no research re: the calcium carbonate causing stomach upset; but people have suggested calcium citrate does not upset stomach).
- Information is based on current research
- References and resources are included
- Materials are consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid
- Teaches basic nutrition for prevention of disease

Comments: The content and activities found in this independent study program provides a good foundation for paraprofessional educators. It is written at an appropriate literacy level, but may be difficult for an educator whose first language is not English. Meetings are scheduled with the paraprofessional's supervisor to go over each unit. If there are literacy issues they can be addressed at that time. Several typos were found during the review but this does not take away from the content. Most of the readings are current and draw on a number of excellent reputable sources. Several of the lessons are based on readings directly from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the MyPyramid web site. The materials covered teach basic nutrition and strategies for the prevention of disease.

Format

- Materials are culturally and ethnically sensitive, and reflect diversity among paraprofessionals ie, includes information on a variety of values, practices, and/or food patterns representative of different lifestyles, cultures, and socioeconomic levels.
- Materials prepare paraprofessionals to work with diverse audiences
- Learning goals and objectives clearly stated
- Information is well organized, easy to understand and easy to use
- Instructions for material are easy to follow
- Layout makes it easy to follow the sequence of the materials
- Literacy level based on reading grade level appropriate for paraprofessional
- Text legible and easy to read

Comments: The materials provide several activities and readings that address cultural and ethnic sensitivity but the reviewers felt that this could have been emphasized more. This lack of emphasis is due to the fact that new educators must attend a separate two-day multicultural diversity training in the first year of employment. In terms of the learning goals and objectives, each unit starts with a section on the expected outcome from completing the readings and activities, and they are clear and measurable. Each unit has an overview that addresses why this topic is important. The layout is simple with a number of directed readings followed by learning activities where topics are practiced and a lot of self reflection is done. The materials and selected reading are easy to read and appropriate for most nutrition educators.

Consider the criteria listed in each section when reviewing the materials. Criteria

For Web-based tools (Adobe Connect, BlackBoard, websites), please review these additional topics:

- Web site information is current, Hyperlinks work
- Easy to follow sequence; layout user friendly
- Readability
 - Text size is adequate for viewing
 - Good contrast between text and background
- Navigation through the web site is logical
 - navigation buttons
 - site map or search tool available

No advertising

Comments: The course was updated in November 2009. The layout is straightforward with active links within the Word Document. All the material is readable and presented in an organized manner. The site map provides easy access to the various pages but the search function within WNEP does not work for simple searches even when the actual name of a document is used. The WNEP Training and Support page <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/train/index.cfm> is one of many pages that make up the WNEP website.

Adult Learning Theory

- Design is learner centered and interactive
- Materials include a variety of educational experiences for varied learning styles (hearing, seeing, doing)
- Opportunities are provided for learner
 - to share experiences
 - reflect on importance
 - connect to real world examples
 - apply knowledge to other situation
- Learning activities support objectives
- Paraprofessionals are actively involved in the learning process
- Paraprofessional voices are heard more than trainer's during learning activities
- Materials have a positive and respectful tone

Comments: Given that this is an independent study course the curriculum did make an attempt at creating activities for the learner consistent with adult learning theory. This included self reflection, connecting to real world examples, and applying knowledge. The directed reading and assignments are to be completed independently and then the supervisor meets face to face with the paraprofessional to review what has been learned and offer support where needed. This format allows participants to share what they have learned and have their voices heard. What is covered and how these face-to-face sessions are conducted is not structured. The supervisor decides how these meeting are run.

Consider the criteria listed in each section when reviewing the materials. Criteria

Evaluation

- Material Development
 - Author or producer of material is credible source (government, university)
 - Peer reviewed
 - Tested with Extension nutrition paraprofessionals
 - Impact evaluation has been conducted
- Evaluation tools included with materials
 - Self assessment of paraprofessional
 - Follow-up evaluation of paraprofessional

Comments: There is no formal evaluation of the independent study course. For the activities that involved learning about MyPyramid Wisconsin did develop a My Pyramid Quiz. The link to the quiz and answer key can be found at:

- My Pyramid Quiz - http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/files/mypyramid_quiz.pdf
- My Pyramid Answer Key - http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/files/mypyramid_quiz_answers.pdf

The opportunity for students to share what they have learned is addressed during the face-to-face meetings with their supervisor. The course has not been peer reviewed but the content is a reflection of numerous content specialists. In the future Wisconsin is considering an online course where participants register and their activities are tracked (time spent on each lesson, completion of assignments etc...). The course will incorporate Blackboard or some other type of distance ed. technology to facilitate interaction between the nutrition educators. Right now the course completion is based on an honor system and a lot falls on the site supervisor to make sure it is getting done. Wisconsin also has varying levels of commitment from their supervisors which has an impact on the education provided in the county offices.

Ease of Use

- Settings where materials can be used (Check all that apply)
 - Individual
 - Group
 - Facilitator led
 - Self-learning
 - Distance
 - On-line

Suitable for Initial training Ongoing training Both

Overall Strength: It is clear that Wisconsin makes training a priority. The WNEP independent Study course represents only one facet in a comprehensive training program that includes face-to-face work with a supervisor, job shadowing, 6 days of workshops that build on the independent study course and many other training opportunities. Given this, the course serves its purpose. It provides a basic understanding of the main themes within EFNEP and SNAP-Ed programming and models some of the techniques used by learner centered educators. The assigned readings are short and to the point and also get the participants familiar with some of the web-based resources they will use in the field. This resource can be useful for new employees that don't start at the same time and also as a refresher for staff to do at home and review during a team meeting. The review team felt that many of the resources found on the WNEP site could benefit other EFNEP programs around the country (many are available in both English and Spanish). Here are several worth sharing:

- WNEP Coordinators Guide for Training New Educators is a detailed list of training requirements and timeline for what new educators need to complete (http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/files/NewEducator_guidelines.pdf).
- Two documents support the evaluation of new educators and can be used to assess paraprofessionals and support their professional development:
 - Self Evaluation of Nutrition Educators Duties and Tasks is an evaluation tool the paraprofessional uses to identify area for improvement (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/files/selfeval.pdf>).
 - Professional Development Plan for Nutrition Educators is a tool used by the supervisor to support the professional development of the paraprofessional (http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/files/07prodev_plan.pdf).
- Stretching Your Food Dollars booklet gives good ideas and strategies for stretching food dollars, planning meals for good nutrition, planning meals to save time and money, ideas for meals, making and using a grocery list. (English <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/B3487.pdf>, Spanish <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/B3487.pdf>).
- How Food Affects You booklet includes information on each of the food groups in MyPyramid, and how to choose and prepare food from each of the food groups (Eng. <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/B3479.pdf>, Spanish <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/B3479S.pdf>).
- Eating for Pleasure and Health focuses on how to buy and fix good food with less fat
 - English <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/B3538.pdf>,
 - Spanish <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/B3538.pdf>..
- Creative Cooking gives lots of simple, realistic suggestions for cooking nutritious meals. It also gives great suggestions for substitutions when you don't have all the ingredients in a recipe or all the kitchen tools. (English <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/B3485.pdf>, Spanish <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/B3485S.pdf>).
- Money for Food is a curriculum to help families with limited resources become more food secure. The means for reaching this goal is education about managing family resources to better enable participating families to purchase

adequate, nutritious food throughout the month. It incorporated numerous games to apply the concepts in each lesson. (English <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/teach/mff/mffall.pdf>, Spanish <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/teach/mff/mffspanish.pdf>).

- *Guidelines for Handling Requests for Assistance with Medical Nutrition Therapy* – Explains what WNEP staff can do when clients ask for diet advice that falls under Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT). It is important to note that each state has different regulations regarding MNT (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/files/medther.pdf>).
- My Pyramid Quiz - (http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/files/mypyramid_quiz.pdf).
- My Pyramid Answer Key (http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/files/mypyramid_quiz_answers.pdf).

Areas of Concerns or Questions:

- At the present time much of the material on the WNEP website is open to the public. The assumption is that this will continue, but when opening some of the documents on the WNEP site a log-on prompt was initiated. It was still possible to view the documents even though the log on was not used.
- Not all the selected reading materials are available through the web. The purchase of several books is required to complete the assigned readings. As such, this independent study program does not stand alone.
- Several resources mentioned in the unit lessons do not have URLs. They are accessible at <http://learningstore.uwex.edu> but you have to type them into the search engine.
- The face-to-face segments of the WNEP training program do not have formal lesson plans. This may lead to variability in what is covered/reinforced with the paraprofessionals throughout the state.
- The two three day conferences paraprofessionals must attend have a series of session that tie into each of the 10 units in the independent study course. It would be good to review the lesson plans for these sessions, but WNEP has not formalized this part of their training program yet. Each session is developed by a content specialist and does not follow a set format.
- There is no formal evaluation of the independent study course. The supervisor does meet with the paraprofessionals to discuss the course content and assess if the materials are being learned but there is no evaluation tool used.
- A peer review of the study course has not been completed.
- The course could be strengthened by including more case studies where concepts are applied based on a given scenario.
- It might be beneficial to include additional units on time management, personal safety, work place etiquette, and teaching and classroom management.
- The *“Understanding the Food Choices of Low Income Families”* article was published in 1993 and may not represent the latest research on this topic.

References:

Criteria for Evaluating Training Materials. Lester, Richard. Training and Development Journal, August 1971

Evaluating Professional Development Resources: Selection and Development Criteria. August 2003.

Available at: <http://www.aalpd.org/Evaluating%20Professional%20Development%20PDF.pdf>

4-H Curriculum Review Score Sheet.

Available at: <http://www.4-hcurriculum.org/projects/visualarts/Other/Report-From-Natioanl-Jury.pdf>

Written Nutrition Education Materials Review Form. Available at: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SP120.pdf>

2009 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Nutrition Education Plan Guidance.

Available at: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fsn/Guidance/2009.1SNAP-Ed%20Guidance.pdf>

SNE My Pyramid Catalog Materials Form. <http://www.sne.org/mypyramid/materials.php> accessed April 30, 2009

Standardized SNE e-Catalog Review Criteria Form <http://www.sne.org/mypyramid/about.php> accessed April 30, 2009

Post Review University of Wisconsin Program Leadership Comments:

- Newest revision now available is November 2010
- There is a Food Resources management component for the independent study course (See Unit 10)
- Do not necessarily cover physical activity, vegetarian diets, vitamins, minerals and calories (although indirectly)
- The Diversity/Cultural Competence component is addressed in the face-to-face session which is not available on-line.
- Many of the resources indicated available at the learning store will be discontinued because of out of date references, eventually to be replaced with other resources, so be aware that requests for purchase may be denied once inventory has been exhausted.