

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Creating a Learning Environment Through Volunteer Work

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

In a nutrition course, students engage in service learning by volunteering in a soup kitchen. The instructor builds partnerships with local establishments that allows students individually to set up a day and time to volunteer.

In addition to spending a day volunteering, students choose a menu item from the soup kitchen's website, analyze the nutritional value, make changes based on the concepts learned during class to increase nutrient density and lower energy density, and post the modified menu to the class discussion board. Finally, students must comment on what they observed at the soup kitchen when they volunteered and how it made them feel.

The class includes another component in which each student examines their own food intake over a three-day period. The student analyzes the nutrient content of everything consumed and turns in the reported findings. Students also compare labels and ingredients for similar types of food, analyze the nutrient content of each, and discuss the findings in class.