

Creating Excitement About Healthy Food | How Preppies Designed New Tuckshop Options by Kat Cacavas

As a qualified Dietitian and Nutritionist, and Primary Teaching graduate, I recently had the unique chance to use a university placement opportunity to combine my two areas of interest - Nutrition and Literacy Education. While living and working in a lovely remote island school, located within an Indigenous community, I came to realise that half of the students opted to receive twice daily meals/snacks through their school Tuckshop. Working alongside the Tuckshop Manager provided a perfect platform to create engaging connections to the school curriculum, while empowering students to be changemakers by designing new menu options. What transpired was an exciting opportunity to support student learnings across the Australian Curriculum – mainly in Design and Technologies, but also in English and Mathematics.

I designed a unit entitled ‘Snack Packs’, and across a series of five lessons, Prep students were led through the following key steps:

- Navigating, reading and viewing the ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating’
- Interpreting, analysing and classifying foods
- Identifying important sources of foods in their local community, including bush tucker foods
- Tasting familiar and unfamiliar healthy foods and indicating preferences for their Snack Packs
- Meeting with the Tuckshop Manager to discuss inclusion of the healthy Snack Packs on the menu
- Designing labels for healthy Snack Packs



(Australian Government, 2015)

Design Technologies – Snack Packs
“Tasting Different Foods”

Food	Yes 😊	No 😞
Strawberries	✓	✗
Pears	✓	
Cherry Tomatoes	✗	✗
Celery and Peanut Butter	✗	✓

The final product saw the students combine their preferred healthy snack items, that could be served together as a ‘Snack Pack’ and go on to present their learnings to the Tuckshop Manager during a visit to the school’s Tuckshop. When offered the opportunity to ask questions one student asked, “when are our Snack Packs going to be ready for the rest of the school?” and a second student queried “how are we going to put our label on the Snack Packs’ container?”. These questions demonstrated the sense of engagement and ownership that this unit had created.

Student work sample: taste preferences

The process of teaching this unit with the Prep students, seeing their food and literacy skills develop, accompanied by their excitement learning about, tasting and finally designing and labelling healthy Snack Packs for their school community was a wonderful journey. This project shows potential for future Design and Technologies units that integrate cross-curricular opportunities, while addressing a community-relevant issue such as health and wellbeing.



Student work sample – Snack Pack label

Is there a teacher at your school who might like to run classroom activities that provide constructive ideas for the tuckshop?

For ideas on classroom activities that relate to nutrition visit:

- [Phenomenom](#) includes lesson plans that relate to curriculum for Prep – Year 10. Developed by Horticulture Innovation Australia.
- [RefreshED](#) has curriculum materials for Prep-Year 10. Developed by Edith Cowan University in Western Australia.
- Contact Kat Cacavas to hear more about her experience on kat_cacavas@hotmail.com

References

Australian Government, National Health and Medical Research Council, Department of Health. (2015). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating. Retrieved from https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/The%20Guidelines/final_igthe_a3_poster_-_lr.pdf

Acknowledgements:

I would like to acknowledge and pay my respects to the Bwgcolman people of Palm Island, to their elders past, present and emerging, on whose land I was welcomed for this enriching student placement.