• Please make sure you had a chance to stick your hand in the “mystery bucket” before sitting.
Viva Vegetables

A Utah State University collaboration to increase vegetable consumption

Meagan Latimer, Eligibility Specialist
Food $ense Nutrition Education Program
Utah State University Extension
Outline

• Traditional nutrition education
• The Viva Vegetables approach
• USU research
Objectives

• Understand the Viva Vegetables approach and why it can be effective in increasing vegetable consumption
• Contrast Viva Vegetables approach to traditional nutrition education
• How to incorporate the Viva Vegetables approach into your classrooms
If your students asked you why they should eat vegetables, what would you tell them?
• Think about what “traditional nutrition education” means to you
  – What is taught?
  – What is the focus?
  – What does the classroom look like?
  – What is the impact on the students after that lesson? Do they change their behavior?
Is there a need for a new approach?

• “Any person looking at the published literature about these programs would have to conclude that they are generally not working.”
  - Dr. Tom Baranowski

• “You can tell students what they need to know very fast. But they will forget what you tell them even faster.”
  - Mel Silberman, author of Active Learning: 101 Strategies to Teach Any Subject
Peas share your expertise

• Why don’t the traditional nutrition education methods create sustainable change?
  – In children?
  – In adolescents?
  – In adults?
  – In general?
Learning and the Brain

- Incoming information is continually questioned:
  - Have I heard or seen this information before?
  - Where does this information fit? What can I do with it?
  - Can I assume that this is the same idea I had yesterday or last month or last year?
• Americans are still not meeting recommendations

• Increase attributed to intake of starchy vegetables (potatoes)
  – Neglect of Dietary Guidelines focus on dark green and orange vegetables

• Obesity rates have triples among teens
...Viva Vegetables...
WHO is Viva Veggies?

• Collaboration between researchers, educators, and the community to increase vegetable consumption

  – Professors and students in USU Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences
  – Elementary school teachers in Cache Valley

  – Food $ense Nutrition Education Program
The Viva Vegetables approach

• We should eat them first because they TASTE GOOD
• A literally “touchy-feely” approach to nutrition education through the five senses
• Whole foods
• Emphasis on assimilation
The idea behind the approach

- Increased GI Health
- Increased Satiety
- Increased Nutrient Density
- Reduced Energy Density
- Improved Cardiovascular Health
- Improved Cancer Risk
- Improved Cardiovascular Health
- Improved Diabetes Prevention/Management
- Improved Hypertension Management (DASH)

Viva Veggies
The Viva Veggies reasons

• It’s crunchy
• It’s juicy
• It makes a popping noise when you bite it
• It’s smooth and rough at the same time
• It feels like little marbles
• It’s squishy
Viva Veggies education

• SIMPLE
• Utilization of active learning principles
• Helps children relate vegetables to things they already know
• Wanted to create an environment in which they could learn and remember
USU research

• Spring 2008
  – Vegetable-specific monthly newsletters
  – Developed 3-20 minute units for four vegetables
    • Taste/mouth feel
    • Sight, smell, touch, hearing
    • How it grows
  – Hands-on
  – Comparisons
  – Analysis pending
USU research

• Fall 2008-Spring 2009
  – Continuation of vegetable-specific newsletters
  – Parent education classes focusing on 1 vegetable per month
  – School lunch intervention
**Turnip your creative juices**

- Work with unfamiliar vegetables
  - Have students teach the class how to prepare and serve with an emphasis on the whole vegetable (no hiding)
- Write a menu based on newly discovered veggies that would satisfy Dietary Guidelines recommendations
- Talk about serving size in terms with which students are familiar (plate method, tennis ball)
Beet these new ideas!

• Emphasize different preparation methods and have students taste and smell the difference
  – Saute, broil, bake, grill, steam, stir-fry
• Come up with a creative way to remember seasonal veggies and how to choose the tastiest
• Discuss pros and cons of locally grown produce vs. grocery store produce
• Do a cooking show
Aspara

GUÊSS what else you can do?

• Have a local gardener/farmer lecture in your classroom about growing veggies and how the sensory properties of fresh grown vegetables differ from store-bought/canned/frozen.

• Discuss spices/flavorings that could be utilized
  – Cinnamon
  – Sesame salt
  – Jalapeno juice
  – Orange juice

• Learn how to grow a garden
Resources for you and your classroom

• Active Learning: 101 Strategies to Teach Any Subject, by Mel Silberman
• The Volumetrics Eating Plan by Barbara Rolls
• Mollie Katzen
  – Salad People
  – Pretend Soup
  – Honest Pretzels
• F$NE website at extension.usu.edu/fsne
  – Newsletters
  – Viva Veggie curriculum
• “Unhappy Eating”, Michael Pollan, NY Times January 28, 2007
Viva Veggies Summary

• Back to the basics
• Hands-on
• Whole foods
“Find funding and build a teaching garden/demo kitchen to grow, harvest, cook, and eat vegetables together in classroom settings for kids/adults/college students…”
“The best way to promote vegetable eating is to feed yummy and beautiful produce to people. And, if they’ve been involved in growing/preparing it, they’ll be even more receptive and motivated. Bring back some of those ‘lost arts’!”

-Tammy Vitale, USU professor
Questions?
Thank you for attending.