

The Biggest Winner: Beating the Odds Against Obesity

By Andrew Roberts
6th grade

Subject Areas: Mathematics, Science, Health, Technology, and Literacy

Overview:

So our town is not the fittest, but is that something to sweat? If obesity is creeping up then that needs to be brought to the town's attention. What can we do as a class, school, or community? Our goal as a class is to bring this issue to the front and tackle it head on. The Biggest Winner is a competition to see who can lose the most weight and make lifestyle changes through nutrition choices, personal well-being, all parts of health, and getting the community involved. The question becomes how do we accomplish this?

The 6th graders will be grouped according to what part of town they live in. Five students will be assigned to the sections of town made up by the students creating boundaries that our class can monitor for the competition. Each part of town will be assigned colors come up by the students representing each section of parents and community members. The sections of town will be assigned a physician, dietician/nutritionist, and two fitness experts all from the community to help them in their weight loss journey along with the education of personal lifestyle choices with nutrition, exercise, well-being, and what goes into making a change.

The students will have many opportunities for academic learning. Students will bring in the measurements every week for 16 weeks and compare the numbers between the teams every week. Figuring out what a calorie is and applying that to the Eat This! Not This game with the measurement of calories in their favorite foods. Another science connection will be to have replicas of teeth and show how beverages effect them like soda, coffee, milk, juice, tea, and water along with looking at sugar amounts in each. Students will help their parents and community members make a grocery list with the help of the dietician/nutritionist. This is a community effort that culminates with a large event unveiling the weight loss numbers, a nutritious lunch put together by the student with chefs from the community, a short workout, and demonstrations on the human body effected by the consumption of certain unhealthy foods, lack of exercise, beverage consumptions.

My project addresses the idea that these 6th graders have a voice in changing the way our community views their health with exercise, proper nutrition, health inducing behaviors, and a personal choice to work towards being a more active community striving to become healthy tying into meaningful service devoted to helping their parents or members of the community reach their health goals for personal health. The students will be partnering with a local dietician/nutritionist, fitness experts, and a physical with each section of town to embody the commitment to health and reflect on what they have learned from these professionals in and out of the classroom setting. Identifying each section from the town leads to recognize the health problem within the community to assess and using tools like their writing journal, Eat This! Not That game, and shopping at the grocery store with their parents for evaluation tools. The students will make academic connections with science for nutrition on calories or the amount of sugar in beverages along with technology mapping the human body in 3-D on the white board to lead to

the final product in the recognition with a community wide celebration towards the steps of achieving positive personal health choices.

Link to Curriculum:

1. Demonstrate functional health literacy skills to obtain, interpret, understand and use basic health concepts to enhance personal, family and community health (Health Literacy, Grade 6). The students will be informed on physical health (exercise), emotional/mental health, and other health inducing behaviors/choices (brushing teeth, rest, exercise, nutrition) to help them personally along with parents and members of the community.
2. Demonstrate behaviors that foster healthy, active lifestyles for individuals and the benefit of society (Health Literacy, Grade 6). Going grocery shopping with parents, making exercise a daily habit, and getting rest are examples of behaviors in this service-learning project that will aid in active lifestyles of the community.
3. Understand and apply knowledge of the functions and interconnections of the major human body systems including the breakdown in structure or function that disease causes (Life Science, Grade 6). Throughout much of the service-learning project students will look at the effects beverages, unhealthy foods, and lack of exercise do to the human body along with the benefits of healthy foods and daily exercise.
4. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences (Literacy, Grade 6). The students will consistently be reflecting on topics like nutrition, exercise, health inducing behaviors/choices, and a personal commitment to their health with audiences like their parents or community members, dietician/nutritionist, and myself for their benefit.

Steps:

Day 1

1. Divide up the students into the sections of town they are from.
2. Have the students pick out a color for their team.
3. The students will go home and write down some of the items in their fridge.
4. From their lists, students will determine which foods are healthy and which foods are not healthy. The students will group those foods and write them down in their writing journal.
5. The students will show their list to the dietician/nutritionist for approval and bring back to the classroom.

Day 2

6. We will look at what the definition of a calorie is and why learning about calories is important to nutrition.
7. The students will split up into their sections and play the Eat This! Not That game to figure out what to eat and not to eat.
8. The students will write down two foods to not eat and two foods to eat in their writing journal to show to their parents along with community members in their section.
9. With this knowledge, students will write down a meal planned in their writing journal at home one night during the week. The dietician/nutritionist will take a look and make suggestions if necessary. The families will go grocery shopping and plan out the list before hand with the dietician/nutritionist participating in helping each section shop for nutritious foods.

Day 3 & 4

10. The students will bring their meals back to class and we will share them to see if they are healthy or unhealthy.
11. A set of teeth will be brought out in a container and each beverage will be soda, coffee, milk, juice, tea, and water to see the effects.
12. Also the measurement of how much sugar in each beverage will be shown in a container, so the students can take a look of the amount of sugar in the body.

Day 5 & 6

13. After that, we will take a 3-D look at the human body on the white board (major organs, circulatory system, skeletal system, digestive system, and respiratory system) to see what the effects of excess sugar and unhealthy foods can do to the body.
14. The students from each group will each have a system of the body, draw it on large construction paper, and write down what foods would go into a healthy body.
15. When completed, each group will explain what foods they chose and why they are essential to good health.

Day 7, 8 & 9

16. The students will participate in a warm up directed by a couple of fitness experts from one of the sections of town.
17. After that, the students will take their pulse and write it down in their writing journal.
18. The fitness experts will explain a normal level of pulse along with levels that are too low or too high.
19. From there, the experts will explain why exercise is an important part of staying healthy and the amount that should be done daily.
20. The students in each group will brainstorm and share what exercises will help to maintain physical health.
21. We will look at the human body (major organs, skeletal system, circulatory system, respiratory system, and digestive system) in 3-D on the white board to see the effects from exercise and taking care of physical health.
22. The students will then write down one personal goal to stay physically health and share it with their parents along with community.

Day 10 & 11

23. We will brainstorm what other behaviors/choices will help to contribute to physical health (brushing teeth, rest, sunscreen, etc.)
24. The students will tell me those behaviors/choices they want to highlight and I will write them on a large piece of construction paper to hang for all in the class to see.
25. From there, I will have the students pick out one behavior/choice to write down in their journal and tell me what is so important about that behavior/choice along with why it is essential to overall health.
26. I will come around and check off if they answered both questions to share with their community and parents.
27. The students will show that health behavior choice/behavior to their parents and bring back one essential (product, information, video, etc.) to help influence their behavior/choice in a positive way.
28. We will share those essential and display them in the room for all to see along with a brief description on a 3 x 5 index card.

Day 12, 13, 14 & 15

29. Students will ponder the question: Why is emotional/mental health as important as physical health?
30. After given 3-5 minutes to think about the question, the students will respond and I will write down their answers on a large piece of construction paper to hang for all in the class to see.
31. We will discuss what affects emotional/mental health (weight gain, loss of job, death in the family/friend, financial problems, stress, etc.) and ways to help prevent problems.
32. Students will write down one way they can help their emotional/mental health and I will check off if they made that commitment.
33. The students will take their commitment home to share with their parents and community members.
34. Each group will write down one encouragement or piece of support for their section of town written on large construction paper to hang for all in their section to see.

Each week

1. The students will collect weigh in numbers from each member participating in The Biggest Winner.
2. Each group will post the number on Monday to see what the total weight loss was from each section.
3. The group with the highest weight loss each week will get to keep the trophy for the week until another section beats them.
4. This will go on for 16 weeks and be tallied up to see the total weight loss for each section of the town.
5. Each participant in the sections of town will write down their weight every week for the 16-week period.
6. At the community gathering for The Biggest Winner, the team who has the highest weight loss will keep the trophy and the person who loses the most weight will receive a trophy as well.
7. The community gathering will have a nutritious lunch with the menu made by the students cooked by local chefs, a live exercise with the fitness experts, and demonstrations of how the human body is affected by unhealthy foods, exercise, and other health reducing or inducing behaviors/choices.

Resources:

<http://www.nbc.com/the-biggest-loser/>

Zinczenko, D. & Goulding, M. (2011). *Eat this! Not that*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books.

Zinczenko, D. & Goulding, M. (2009). *Cook this! Not that*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books.

Zinczenko, D. & Goulding, M. (2008). *Eat this! Not that: Supermarket survival guide*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books.

Zinczenko, D. & Goulding, M. (2010). *Drink this! Not that*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books.