

Northlands College Eastern Region Study Group

PROGRAM CONTENT:

Our program is located in the town of Creighton in North Eastern Saskatchewan. Our students come from the communities of Pelican Narrows, Sandy Bay, Cumberland House, Creighton, Flin Flon, Denare Beach, and Deschambault Lake. We have one classroom. The classroom has a fridge and kettle in it. There is a student lounge area outside our classroom. There are also Adult 12, TEL, and cosmetology classes in our facility.

The program is a Bridging program, which takes students from where they are academically to a readiness level for entry into the Adult 12 program. We work in a quadmester system.

Question: Would including food preparation and/or sharing food within the class keep students in class longer?

We made the decision to offer nutritious snacks such as toast, peanut butter, jelly, cheez whiz, hard cheese, fruit – which includes apples, oranges and bananas – milk, fruit juice, coffee, tea, creamer, sugar and sugar twin. Toast and spreads are available each day. Coffee and tea are available at all times, but the decision was made to replace fruit juices with fruit since fruit has less sugar and is more filling than juice.

Everything is set out before class start. I plug in coffee and the students pretty well take care of the rest. Food remains available all day. We have had absolutely no problem with class interruptions because of the food. Students help themselves before class, at break time or during the day when the class is quiet.

The program began November 3/03 with 21 students registered in Bridging Math in the morning and 20 in Bridging English in the afternoon. Those students who had been in Quad I were aware that a food program would be starting. There were 12 returning students who had been in Quad I and 9 new students at the start of Quad II.

When everyone arrived on November 3 (our first day), the room was filled with comments like, "Wow, isn't this great! Oh, I am hungry!" It also proved to be a great icebreaker for the new students. The students were asked to journal their responses to the following question:

What do you think about having food (toast, etc) available to you in the morning before 9:00 a.m.?

Responses: (November 5/03)

- I think it's a great idea because many times students don't really have time or think it's important enough to make time for breakfast. I am grateful that the program is for us.
- This morning as I walked to school. I was thinking how fortunate we are having the food program in class.
- The food does make you alert because it helps you think and gives you energy.
- I think it is a great idea to have a breakfast that the students can serve themselves if desired. Juice, milk and coffee is available throughout the day, good idea...
- As a student, I think that the nutrition program is good. All the fruit and juices are a great idea for breakfast. Being hungry in class is not healthy and with the supplies given, myself and others are able to have something to eat. It is really helpful for those who don't have breakfast in the morning.
- I think being able to have snacks in the classroom makes it a little more relaxing and easier to get work done.
- My first response to breakfast program would be awesome.
- Yes, I think this program will benefit everyone in the class and also everyone that comes to school in the future to take their Bridging to Adult 12. I would like to say THANK YOU to the College and administration, whoever thought of this idea. It's simply right on man!
- I think having a snack program is an excellent idea. I am sitting here feeling better after a couple of slices of toast. I woke up this morning with a few chores to do before school and ran out of time to make anything. It was helpful putting something in my empty stomach.

Journal Feedback – November 10/03

Question: Does having food available make you want to come to class?

Responses:

- No, because I came to school to learn, not to come and eat. There are some mornings that I've been thankful for the toast and cheese.
- Yes, having food in class makes me want to come to class. When I wake up early, I have a bite to eat, still I get hungry. The food available makes it easier for me to grab and munch. It keeps me awake in the mornings.
- Yes, it's good to know there is something to eat if you're running late and can't eat at home.
- Not, really I come to school to learn.
- It is good to know that if I am running late and can't have breakfast at home, I can have some and fruit when I get to class.
- It's good I guess. I mean I don't come here for the food. I come for my education. But yeah, it's good to satisfy my hunger when I'm waiting for help.
- No, I eat breakfast at home, but it's nice to have food available throughout the day for a snack.
- No, I come here to learn, not to eat. But I think it's a great idea to have food in the class.

- No, I come to class because I like it, but I like the food.

Journal Feedback – November 14/03

Question: What have you eaten? Does the food make you feel more alert?

- I have eaten toast with cheese, apples, bananas, and oranges and yes it makes me feel more alert in the classroom.
- I have eaten some toast with cheez whiz or cheese. The food makes me feel more alert sometimes when I'm hungry.
- I have eaten toast with cheese. Yes, it does make me feel more alert.
- I have eaten the fruit, coffee and make toast/cheese. Yes it does make me feel more alert.
- I ate apples and toast. They make me feel better.
- Oranges, bananas. Eating food gives you energy, I feel a bit more energy after eating a snack.
- Mainly toast and milk.
- I've had toast and fruit on a few occasions and yes it does make me feel a little more alert and it helps me concentrate a little better.
- I have eaten rye bread, fruit, cheese, coffee, the juice was good too. When there's no time to eat breakfast in the morning, it's ok cause you know there's food here.
- I've eaten pretty much everything that is offered. (toast, fruit)
- In class I have eaten toast, apples and oranges. It helps me feel more alert.
- Some mornings in class I have a couple slices of toast and usually by break I have fruit, used to be a lot of juice boxes. Yes having munchies in class makes me more alert.

Journal feedback – November 21/03

Responses:

- Yes, I would like to see it continue because it would help us be more alert in class and help us balance our meals.
- Yes, it is very helpful. Why? Because it sure helps when I sleep in, in the mornings.
- Yes, because I sometimes don't have enough time to eat in the mornings, and when I don't, I don't feel like doing much.
- Yes, definitely, I'd like to see the food program continue. Because I know some students don't have the time to get their breakfast especially and it's a great benefit for them.
- Yes, I would like it to continue. Because I think not everyone has breakfast in the mornings. Because they have not time to cook.

- Yes it would be great to see the food program continue. I'm sure the food program helps increase the class percentage for people coming to class.
- Yes, I would like it to continue because sometimes I'm in a rush in the mornings and I don't eat, I figure I'll just grab some toast at school.
- Yes, if you come to school hungry, you can eat here and not be distracted by your hunger.
- Yes, I would like the food program to continue because this really helps knowing that there's food available for us.
- Yes, it would be very much appreciated if the food program continued. Oh enjoy having the variety of foods available.
- Yes, why not? The program not only benefits the students, but all the teachers...

Student Attendance:

1 student discontinued – November 13/03 – personal reasons

1 student withdrew – November 19/03

Instructor Comments:

Students were far more relaxed in the classroom as compared to the first three weeks in Quad I. They were more alert, and I think more focused on their work. They did not disrupt class at all when preparing food.