

The cost of living crisis- How can teachers and schools support parents, carers and families?

Welcome

I am Clare Thomas, I have been teaching Food and Nutrition within a secondary school environment for 20 years.

Within my career I have taught in 3 different schools within both Warwickshire and Leicestershire. I am currently a second in Design Technology in charge of Food and Nutrition at Ivanhoe School in Ashby-De-La-Zouch.

I have previously taught at two other secondary schools in Coleshill, North Warwickshire and Nuneaton, Warwickshire

I am going to discuss some strategies and ideas that I have used and continue to use within my role as teacher of Food and Nutrition to support families



Idea 1: Bags of ingredients with accompanying recipe cards

- The concept of this is a meal in a bag that could be taken home discreetly by students to make at home with their parents/ families.
- Students are given a bag of ingredients alongside a recipe card. These were supplied from the Pupil premium budget in school, latterly the catch up budget, and also from food bank donations for vulnerable students. Often the recipes had to be thought up fairly quickly to match the availability of those goods that could be made available for families from the food bank, so these largely made use of store cupboard ingredients- for example: store cupboard curry, rice, flatbreads that use very few ingredients- (natural yoghurt and plain flour), tinned and dried, long life foods that could be accessed by the food bank easily to create wholesome, family friendly meals.
- Due to lack of resources at home- time, parental support or equipment, recipe cards provided instructions supported by photographs to show step by step how to make the dish- to allow the student to work independently or to be supported at home.



Store cupboard curry



Peel the garlic removing the paper like outer layers. Chop very finely (mince) or crush using a garlic crusher. Peel the outer skin from the fresh ginger using a vegetable peeler. Carefully grate the fresh ginger using the larger holes on the grater.

Add the diced chicken breasts into a large saucepan with a small amount of oil or low calorie spray. Cook the chicken until all of the pink meat has gone white- check that it is not pink inside too. This is very important to prevent food poisoning.

Peel and dice an onion. Add the diced onions, garlic and ginger into the saucepan. Add in the curry paste (2 tablespoons) and stir gently until all of the chicken is coated.

Peel and slice the mushrooms on a brown chopping board using a vegetable knife.

Add the sliced mushrooms into the saucepan

Open the tin of tomatoes and tin of coconut milk using a tin opener.



Add in the tin of chopped tomatoes ad stir until combined.



Add in the tin of coconut milk and stir. Add in the tablespoon of mango chutney (optional)



Drain the chick peas if using and add into the saucepan too.



Simmer for 15 minutes, until the sauce thickens



Serve your store cupboard curry with the flatbreads and rice

Ingredients:

175g Plain, natural yoghurt
175g Self raising flour
1 teaspoon (5ml) of baking powder
Pinch of salt- optional
Low calorie spray or 5 ml oil



In a large mixing bowl, add 175g self raising flour with 175g natural yoghurt, a teaspoon of baking powder and a pinch of salt



Roll each of the pieces of dough into ball. Carefully flatten each of the pieces with your fingers or a rolling pin until a flatbread is formed.

Flatbreads

Flatbreads are served as an accompaniment to store cupboard curry. To make them healthier you could use wholemeal flour which will add additional fibre, you could use low fat or fat free natural yoghurt too. You should select the low calorie spray instead of the oil when frying.



Mix together the ingredients with a spoon until a ball of dough is formed.



Place a small amount of oil or low calorie spray into a frying pan. Place the flatbreads into the frying pan and heat gently. The flatbreads will start to puff up and rise a little.



Take the dough out of the bowl and place onto a floured surface- form into a circle shape



Fry gently for a few minutes, turn over using a fish slice and cook for a couple of minutes on the reverse side



Divide the circle of dough into 6 equal pieces using a knife. **Employability focus: Uses numeracy skills- dividing**



Serve with lamb koftas or store cupboard curry



Pasta bake



Gather all of your ingredients together ready



Chop the pepper into small pieces



Grate 50g cheese



Place the chicken onto a red chopping board or a plate.



Cut the chicken into small, bite size pieces using a sharp knife



Mince a garlic clove using a sharp knife or use a garlic crusher



Cut the broccoli florets into smaller pieces



Sprinkle the grated cheese over the top of the vegetables and pasta



Peel and dice your onion and add to a small amount of oil in a saucepan



Heat the saucepan and carefully cook the chicken ensure that all meat has changed from pink to brown



Deseed the pepper- scoop out the seeds



Add the cooked chicken and onion mixture into a large oven proof dish



Add in 2 tins of chopped tomatoes and 100g dried pasta and stir well

Bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes until the cheese has melted

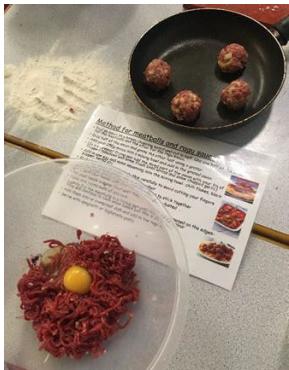
Make sure that all of the foods are coated with the tomatoes

Serve with garlic bread. The bread was made with a stale bloomer, fresh garlic and some melted butter.

Community cook along workshops- supporting students and their families

Idea 2: Community cook along workshops for families:

- Students were invited, alongside their families to attend these after school/ twilight sessions.
- Often this could be in liaison with the family support worker, advertising via the school newsletter, promotion within the classroom and gaining expressions of interest from students.
- The focus was on demonstrating the skills involved in creating affordable family meals such as meatballs, pasta bake, lamb koftas/ vegetable skewers and flatbreads, that could be replicated at home.
- Recipe cards from the sessions were also sent home so that families were equipped to be able to make the recipe again.



Idea 3: Local community involvement- The inspiration behind the ingredient bags Morrisons pizza kits initiative used during lockdown

- During lockdown I tapped into support that was being offered by a local supermarket.
- There was a project whereby Morrisons supermarket were offering make at home pizza kits for students and their families. Following on from the success of this for our keyworker and vulnerable students we launched our own recipe bags.
- Community cooking champions from our local store have provided ingredients to support the delivery of our after school parents sessions



Use of Food banks



- Whilst providing healthy and nutritious ingredients is important, so too was the opportunity for students to make the same as their peers- for example- fruit crumble, zesty orange cake etc. The food bank donations allowed us to provide these such experiences with a regular supply of fresh, perishable foods
- Sometimes if the technology was available then students would send in an image of what they had made.



Idea 4: Speak to students about avoiding food waste to develop awareness

- Ensure theory lessons and content look at reducing food waste- re rolling scraps of foods when pastry making/ biscuit rolling, using up leftover foods
- Leftover mashed potatoes from a roast meal- combine with a tin of tuna and spring onion/ tin of sweetcorn to make fishcakes
- Vegetables could be used up to make a soup
- Ramen bowl can be created from small amounts of leftover foods
- Batch cooking- looking at methods of cooking- where savings can be made- use of the hob rather than to oven bake
- Food waste Action week March 6th -12th 2023- Students are set a research homework on this topic
- Love Food, Hate waste campaign





Idea 4: Increase students awareness of food waste

Love Food, Hate waste



Food Waste Action week 1-7th March 2021

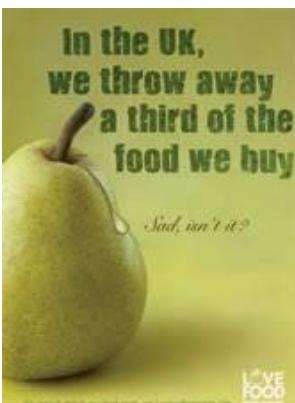
Wasting food feeds climate change- if we stopped throwing away unwanted and uneaten food that is wasted every year then it would do the same for the environment as taking 326,000 tonnes of CO₂ out of our atmosphere. This is because not only does food get wasted but the resources that have gone into creating and producing it too- from land, fertilisers, water that was used for growing it to the greenhouse gases created from its production and transportation



Every day 20 million slices of bread are thrown away in the UK. This could have fed breakfast to 10 million people.



Recap activity: Suggest some ways to reduce waste- recap- we have talked about this previously- recall this knowledge



How can we reduce food waste?



Activity: Use these suggestions and any more you may have to create a leaflet on how to reduce food waste- use PowerPoint, Publisher, Word or paper.

- Only buy what you need- use a shopping list to avoid buying surplus food, check stock already in your cupboards and the fridge before buying new items
- Use the freezer to store food as this will preserve and extend the shelf life of the food. The micro organisms in the food will be frozen and dormant- this prevents them from multiplying and stops the food from decaying. Frozen food can then be defrosted as and when it is needed to save waste
- Look for food with a longer shelf life when purchasing in the supermarket- do not buy food that is close to it's use by or best before date
- Consider portion control when cooking foods like rice and pasta as it is easy to cook more of these foods than is needed which results in waste
- Use up leftover foods from meals by taking a portion of an evening meal for lunch the next day to avoid it being thrown away
- Try to make a meal out of leftover foods before shopping again- be resourceful with the contents of your fridge- **this is your homework task this week**

Starter activity:

- Firstly identify which ingredients you can see in this image
- What could you make from these foods?
- List as many dishes as you can
- You may not have the same leftover ingredients- you will make a meal from those that you do have in your home

Example of a task set to students



Example of a students work on reducing food waste:



 Edit Header

Use use-by dates. These are better than the best before dates as these tell you when to stop using an item. The best before however, only tells you the best time to eat a certain food.

Make sure that you do not over-buy groceries. Doing this can result in things going bad before getting to use them in cooking- then leading to waste

HOW CAN WE REDUCE



WASTE?

Store your food properly. Doing this can help to stop food from going to waste. For example, storing leftover food in the fridge is a good idea as bacteria cannot live on it.

Plan ahead... shopping lists can help you to stop buying unnecessary items and stick to buying what you specifically need. Also, when writing a shopping list, you should think about what you will use and how you will use it. For example, 1 banana for a smoothie and 2 apples for a pie. Another factor is what will be left over and how you can use that.

Practical homework task:

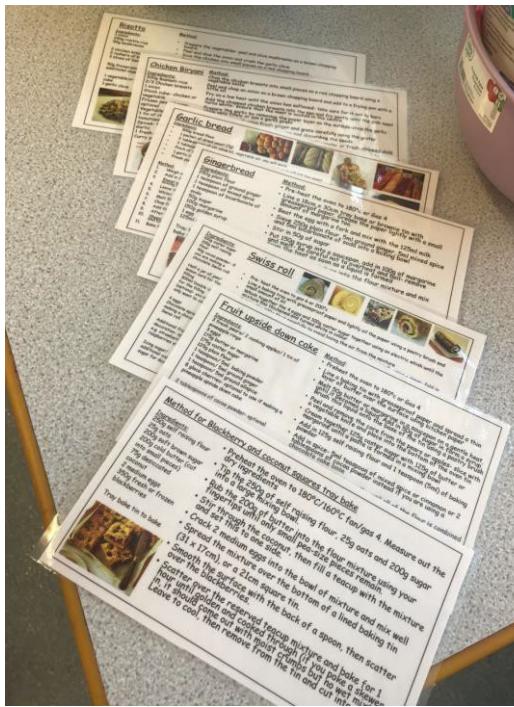
- Make a meal out of leftovers from your fridge- items that would be wasted if they were not used up
- Build upon knowledge gained from our class discussion
- For your homework- take a photo of your items that you are using up from your fridge/ store cupboard
- Take a photo of you using them/ preparing them
- Photograph your final dish

- Homework due:



Idea 5: Make equipment more accessible to allow those students to borrow items to enable them to cook

Loan of equipment or prizes- baking/ cooking equipment as prizes for homework, effort draw/ homework submissions



Idea 6: After school support sessions for Pupil premium students

- These were initially begun as when students were taught in bubbles this meant that only one year group could access the food room.
- Other year groups were given 'cook at home' tasks to complete and there was good engagement with this and parental support. Some students were not able to take part and this highlighted an intervention group that wanted to cook but did not have support or resources.
- This group enjoyed cooking in a smaller group ratio, took home the food that they had made to share with their family, the recipe card to use again and often a bag of ingredients to replicate the dish at home or to support those with larger families to ensure that a meal was provided at home. We talked to students about scaling up a recipe for make it suit a larger number of family members



Support and intervention sessions



Current picture

- Currently my school provide all ingredients to students, so that everyone regardless of the financial abilities to purchase this can cook and take home nutritious food, some students take this to eat at lunchtime as they have no lunch money or lunch to eat.
- To provide opportunities to diversify the recipe and work with a wider range of ingredients I give students the option of bringing in a chicken breast or chorizo for example to add to savoury rice
- I have also trialled allowing students to chose from a table of foods to personalise their own dish- vegetable soup- so that students do not all make the same thing and are aware of several ways to modify their dish using different ingredients. This was suggested on a recent Food a fact of life training. We also used and discussed 'wonky vegetables'- cheaper and still great for use in soup making



Three top tips for supporting families during the cost of living crisis:

- 1. Tap into the local community support as much as possible- whether this is linking with your local food bank- raising donations through in school collections and donations at specific times of year- Harvest festival and Christmas or using this as a
- Use Lidl wonky food boxes- sold at £1.50 for a box of soon to be used produce- use this create a ready, steady cook type challenge to show how meals can be prepared from limited ingredients, look out for free food donations from local businesses- these pumpkins were donated from a local garden centre during the Autumn, post Halloween and were used to make pumpkin soup within school. This was excellent to inform students about food miles, food waste and sustainability



- 2. Be as inclusive as possible- allow students to take recipe cards home so that they can practise their skills at home and make the dish again- allow them to use the facilities and equipment after school- there may be difficulties with using the cooker for prolonged periods of time due to high energy usage worries
- 3. Involve parents and carers- develop the confidence of adults within the home, encourage families to cook and share together- host after school sessions for families
- Lots of these ideas and initiatives were borne out of the need during the pandemic but continue to be used and refined to support students and their families during the cost of living crisis.