

Section C

Consumer awareness

A characteristic of good practice in secondary schools is that learners demonstrate and apply their awareness of consumer preferences and the reasons for choices made.

Key features



Staff are aware of a number of consumer issues in relation to food and drink, highlighting factors that affect selection and choice.



Teaching resources are developed and ingredients sourced that support learners to make informed choices, exploring a range of factors.



Consumer awareness is integrated into Schemes of Work and lessons, demonstrating progression in the development of key concepts and its application over time. Factors affecting food choice are considered and applied when making decisions for themselves and others.



Learners are enabled to apply and justify their knowledge of consumer preference and choice through planning, communication and food preparation activities.



Assessment procedures reflect stated learning intent, demonstrate progression and provide constructive feedback to learners. Consumer awareness is integral when assessing the decisions learners make.



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Our learners have a range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and are given the opportunity to choose a dish for a meal. They research the ingredients online, looking at cost and allergens – and we also consider gluten and halal products. They evaluate the salt, sugar, fat and energy provided. Some learners need visual support or support from an adult to make their selection. This type of work builds confidence and gives real-life skills for the future.

As part of the cooking experience, learners are taken to the local supermarket and will either have a written or visual shopping list to assist them selecting the ingredients they need. Whilst they are shopping, they are encouraged to look at the labels and will discuss with staff the nutrition information and pay at the till independently.

Once back at school, learners make the dish, discuss the ingredients used and carry out self and peer-assessment. It's a rich learning experience and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

JAN'S TIPS

1. Encourage learners to consider where their food comes from. Discuss how and where locally grown and produced food can be sourced.
2. Take learners shopping, or to a farmer's market if possible. Task them to find and buy a particular ingredient for a recipe or activity.
3. Build tasting activities into lessons so that learners can experience a wide range of food. Remember that some learners may not enjoy this type of activity though.

CASE STUDY

Putting the characteristic into practice

Staff and learners recognise the wide range of factors involved in food and drink choice

Plan and undertake activities that demonstrate an understanding of the factors that affect food choice.

These include:

- advertising;
- allergy/intolerance;
- availability;
- body image;
- cooking equipment/facilities;
- cost;
- ethical belief;

- food provenance;
- food skills;
- need;
- packaging;
- peer pressure;
- preference;
- religion;
- season.

Other examples:



Staff and learners apply the factors involved in food and drink choice when making decisions for themselves and others

- Demonstrate how to adapt recipes to meet individual needs and preferences.
- Carry out nutritional analysis to improve the nutritional profile of dishes/menus.
- Consider the cost and availability of ingredients when planning practical activities and dishes.
- Consider local issues, religious, cultural, socio-economic and ethical beliefs when planning activities and dishes.

Other examples:



Staff and learners demonstrate how to make informed choices to achieve a healthy, varied and balanced diet

Demonstrate how informed choices can be made through using:

- food labels;
- ingredient lists;
- nutrition information;
- health claims.

- Modify a recipe to reduce fat, sugar or salt, or increase fibre.

Other examples:



Staff and learners explore a range of ingredients and processes from different culinary traditions

- Research and experience ingredients, recipes and culinary traditions from around the world.
- Trial different cooking methods and presentation styles that reflect different culinary traditions.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

Staff and learners understand, demonstrate and apply how sensory perception guides the choices that people make

- Use a variety of sensory tests to evaluate food and drink.
- Explain and apply how to ensure sensory tests are fair.
- Ensure the procedures for sensory evaluation are safe and hygienic, being aware of food allergies and intolerances and prevention of cross-contamination.
- Use the results of sensory testing to modify recipes/dishes and justify decisions and changes made.

Other examples:



Insights

- Work with parents/carers or members of the local community to offer a variety of cultural experiences to staff and learners, e.g. tasting sessions, talks or cooking activities, using local or traditional ingredients/techniques.
- Plan a series of lessons around eating to a budget, using leftovers or 'store-cupboard meals'.
- Plan practical activities that compare and contrast the selection, cost and nutritional value of dishes, e.g. compare the cost of a ready-made 'value' frozen lasagne, a ready-made chilled 'premium range' lasagne and a home-made recipe. Undertake nutritional analysis to compare the nutritional value of the homemade recipe with the purchased products.
- Plan a series of lessons that investigate how the cost of meals can be reduced through careful planning, choice of ingredients and cooking. These could include:
 - using local, seasonal produce;
 - using cheaper cuts of meat;
 - batch cooking;
 - using 'leftover' food to make a dish, e.g. fish cakes.

- Develop a topic that investigates how culture and food choice are linked. Create a range of dishes that illustrate how special occasions are often linked to food.
- Using a number of real menus from high street food outlets, challenge learners to choose a meal and justify their choice. Repeat the activity but this time ask learners to choose a meal based on a specific need, e.g. within a price limit or for someone that doesn't eat a particular food such as wheat, dairy or meat. Is the meal choice the same as before? Ask learners to explain why/why not.

Going beyond

Set up a sensory testing area and kit to give the learners a specific controlled place to carry out their testing.

Ask a member of the school community with specific needs to be a case study for learners. For example, a colleague who has diabetes or a parent with coeliac disease could be asked to give a short talk (or be recorded) to learners about their food needs. Learners are then challenged to plan/make suitable dishes which could be tasted by the person and feedback given.

