

The digestive process and the probiotics



Summary:

The course investigates the digestive process and the probiotics in connection with alimentation.

Aims:

to understand the role of probiotics in the nutrition and in the digestive process, to help teachers develop their role as facilitators of students' learning, to support the diffusion of IBSE in school.

Main activities:

lab experiments about digestion and composition of aliments

Narrative:

This course includes:

- two days of training for the teachers
- one educational kit with tools to conduct experiments in school.
- one interactive activity (2 hours) for the students

in museum lab on nutrition.

The teacher investigate the digestive process and the probiotics exploring their link with alimentation.

The first day the theme is the digestive process. The digestion is a complex process of chemical and physical transformations that decompose the food in single nutrients and make it assimilable. The digestive apparatus is a system that provide energy and nutrients to the body. In this apparatus the intestine and the intestinal microflora represent an important defense barrier to protect the organism from harmful substance.

The objectives are:

- to understand how the digestive apparatus works
- to experiment how food is transformed in nutrients and therefore used from the human organism
- to compare the composition of different foods
- to relate the composition and the function of different foods

The second day the theme are the probiotics. Food

in general and specially the probiotics contain alive microorganisms that have specific characteristics and relations with the digestive process. They need particular conditions to live in the intestine and to interact with the intestinal microflora, with the immune system and therefore with the whole organism.

The aims are:

- to experiment the presence of alive microorganism in the food
- to discover which are the characteristics of probiotics
- to understand how the probiotics can arrive alive in the intestine and can interact with the complex intestinal ecosystem
- to understand the relations between nutrition and well-being

Methods of learning/training :

inquiry, experimentation, collaborative learning, scientific method, discussion

End user:

in-service teachers of primary and secondary school

Involved actors:

teachers, private company

Location:

National Museum of Science and

Technology Leonardo da Vinci

Languages available:
Italian

Where to find the application:
www.museoscienza.org/scuole/corsiFormazione.asp

Evaluation parameters:

Discussion with teacher, questionnaires.
This best practice has been certified by the internal evaluation of the

Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia "Leonardo da Vinci"

Duration:
2 days, 14 hours

Optimum number of participants:
18

Teachers' Competencies

1	subject matter/content knowledge	x
2	nature of science	x
3	Multidisciplinary	x
4	knowledge of contemporary science	x
5	variety of (especially student-centred) instructional strategies	x
6	lifelong learning	x
7	self-reflection	x
8	teaching/ learning processes within the domain	x
9	using laboratories, experiments, projects	x
10	common sense knowledge and learning difficulties	
11	use of ICTs	x
12	knowledge, planning and use of curricular materials	x
13	Information and Communication Technologies with Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge	



Mapping best practices with main principles

1. Building interest in natural science phenomena and explanations:

The training course is built on a scientific topic and its applications. Through exploration, experimentation, observation, collection of data, development of hypotheses, through first hand involvement of the teachers, the course aims to raise interest in science and technology. Discussion in group aims at developing explanation of the phenomena observed.

2. Building up informed citizens: Students understanding the nature of Science & Science in society:

Participants are called to understand their own contribution as citizens, the importance of their own participation and critical opinion and how their own choices create an impact on how science and technology are perceived and integrated within society. Moreover, in the course scientific evidence is discussed in connection with ethical, social and legal issues.

3. Develop multiple goals:

- understanding big ideas in science including ideas of science, and ideas about science
- scientific capabilities concerned with gathering and using evidence
- scientific attitudes

Teachers investigate scientific phenomena with interactive activities. They are able to explore notions, phenomena, principles and transformations; they also use the different phases of the scientific method. This allows them to deepen into the science process which means build a scientific knowledge about a range of topics, but understand also how science works and what scientific research means.

4. Understanding students' concepts and learning style about of science phenomena:

The courses aim on the development of knowledge and skills in teachers but concentrate also on a metacognitive reflection, focusing on teachers as learners. On this basis, teachers are also invited to examine their own students' learning and involvement in science as well as problems they might face with the students.

5. Relevance of the content to daily life of students:

The choice of the topic is based not only on its scientific importance but also on its relevance with daily life. Also, the educational methodology adopted by the Museum in the training course (as well as in its education programmes) puts at the centre the personal experience and knowledge of each individual. This means that everyday life experience of students is one of the main tools on which training builds. Moreover, the problem solving activities require teachers to use their background knowledge and consequently think of the students' own background.

6. Understanding science as a process not as stable facts. Using up to date information of science and education:

Understanding science as an on-going, not consolidated process emerges from the very activity of experimenting and testing carried out by teachers during the course. On this basis teachers are also encouraged to consider the process they chose to use in order to solve the problem and to collect data in order to confirm or not their hypotheses.

7. Activities for gaining knowledge, not for entertainment, nor for simple imitating of results:

The training course is based on a mix of activities which aim to develop subject-knowledge and skills in science and technology also through the use of interaction, confrontation, enjoyment. The course explores a specific topic not only in terms of its scientific and technological dimensions but also in relation to society, to everyday life and to individuals. The use of emotions. We know that the personal and emotional involvement of participants in the learning experience maximizes the probability for effective learning.

8. Doing science: experimenting, analyzing, interpreting, redefining explanations:

The activities start with an open scientific question posed by the museum trainer. The teachers conduct experiments to explore different answers following observation, data collection and interpretation, development of prediction and discussion of scientific ideas. The scientific method is the basis of all the work done.

9. Assessment: formative ~ of students' learning and the summative ~ of their progress:

The museum is an informal environment of learning and has a role which is complementary to that of the school. Consequently, visitors' learning is not assessed like in schools. We do not use structured tools or processes for assessing the learning experience of our visitors (schools in this case) as this is not part of our education priorities. Informal, personalised, meaningful experiences for each person in a different way is the priority of our education programmes. At the same time, we run self-reflection sessions among education staff in order to analyse how our programmes are developed (education methodologies) and how interaction with the public takes place. The formative and summative assessment are left to the teachers.

10. Cooperation among teachers and with experts:

The training course builds close collaboration between museum experts and teachers as well as collaboration between teachers themselves. This collaboration continues also after the end of the course through update of training or distance support. Moreover, professionals from companies or universities with expertise in different fields are involved in the training. The teachers appreciate very much the discussion with the different experts.