
a dissertation by

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ABSTRACT


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The purpose of this study was to examine the changes of nutrition knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, weight, and Body Mass Index (BMI) in first-year students at Appalachian State University. These changes were assessed through surveys and anthropometric measurements taken at the beginning and again at the end of the academic year. It has been shown that freshmen experience a change in weight, most commonly gain. Thus, the objective of this study was to investigate the possible relationships among the variables of nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. This study also examined how these variables relate to changes in weight and BMI.

The subjects for the study were 75 freshmen enrolled in Freshman Seminar. Sixty of these students were female. The disproportionate population was considered a limitation of the study; however, significant results were achieved for the female segment of the study group.

Survey results showed an increase in knowledge for students receiving education in nutrition. Improvements for attitudes and behaviors were also shown for female students. Fifty of the students experienced weight gain; this increase was found to be significant. Height change, which occurred in 24 students, was also significant. Height
and weight were combined to determine BMI. Statistical treatment of the BMI was significant for the male population.

The results of the surveys were analyzed through Paired Sample $t$ tests and Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation. A correlation of nutrition education and attitudes was significant. Attitudes were also correlated with behaviors. It was concluded that university-provided nutrition education might have an impact on first-year students’ weight health.