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Nutrition Education in the Australian New South Wales primary school curriculum: an exploration of time-allocation, translation and attitudes in a sample of teachers.

Abstract

Issue addressed: The dietary intakes of Australian children are not optimal, with few meeting recommended vegetable and fruit intake targets. Nutrition education in childhood is important for developing healthy eating patterns, with schools an ideal setting for a wide reach. The aims of this study were to examine nutrition education within the NSW primary school syllabus; explore how much time teachers spend teaching nutrition, what is taught, what materials are used, and to identify attitudes towards nutrition education.

Method: An online survey consisting of 29 closed questions (with options for comments) was specifically developed for the purpose of this study. Teachers currently teaching at a NSW primary school were eligible to participate.

Results: 33 NSW primary school teachers completed the survey. Results indicate that limited time is spent on teaching nutrition with some important nutrition education components currently missed, resources perceived to be inadequate, and lack of time reported as the largest barrier to teaching nutrition.

Conclusions: In order to improve the quality of nutrition education in NSW primary schools, several important topics need be integrated into the curriculum and time constraints of teachers should be taken into account.

So what? Findings from the current survey will inform the development of future nutrition education programs and resources with the aim of integrating nutrition education within the primary school curriculum.

Summary

Nutrition education is an important part of helping children develop healthy eating patterns. This survey of 33 NSW primary school teachers examined how nutrition education is currently taught. Results highlight that nutrition education content is limited, mostly due to time-constraints in class.

Keywords

Nutrition, education, NSW, k-6, teachers, survey, schools

Introduction

The benefits of a healthy diet for children are widely recognised and include improved well-being and learning abilities, which in turn may contribute to better school performance.^{1,2} Poor dietary patterns contribute to the high prevalence of childhood obesity in Australia, and calls have been made for intervention programs and policies to improve dietary patterns at family, school, and community levels.^{3,4} The 2015 New South Wales (NSW) Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey found that 78% of NSW primary school students consume the recommended two serves of fruit a day, while only 5% achieved the daily recommendation of five serves of vegetables.⁴ Another Australian study found that only half of the children met the Nutrient Reference Values for key macro and micronutrient intakes.⁵ In addition, Australian children aged 5-16 years frequently consume discretionary foods and drinks that are energy-dense and nutrient poor (e.g. soda, biscuits, doughnuts and cakes).⁴ For this group, about 41% of energy intake comes from discretionary foods that provide little to no nutrients.⁴

To prevent poor dietary habits and excessive weight gain throughout childhood, targeting nutrition knowledge is recommended to establish healthy eating habits before adolescence.⁶⁻⁸ A review of 39 papers on obesity-related behaviours found that eating behaviours established during childhood years are likely to be carried through into adulthood.⁹ However, dietary behaviour is complex and challenging to measure and could be subject to many other influences later in life such as life-course transitions.⁹ Nevertheless, ensuring children have healthy eating behaviours will promote optimal growth and development and possibly help protect against developing diet-related comorbidities later in life.⁴

Interventions at a school level play a key role in the promotion of healthy lifestyle behaviours and healthy weight for school-age children, as they have great potential in reaching a large part of the population.^{6,10} Schools offer access to almost all children, involve skilled professionals (i.e. teachers), and allow opportunities to practice healthy eating.¹¹ Worsley *et al.*¹² reported clear relationships between nutrition education of school children and changes in dietary behaviours in their systematic review of children's healthy eating literature.¹³⁻²¹ Several studies employing curriculum based approaches^{13,14} have demonstrated significant changes in fruit and vegetable consumption¹⁴ and total energy intake reduction.¹³

While nutrition education at a young age has been found to be important for children to develop a healthy dietary pattern, the current level and interpretation of nutrition education in

NSW primary schools is unclear. Nutrition education in NSW primary schools is one of six possible topics within the Personal Health Choices strand of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) curriculum.²² A new curriculum has recently been released and will be implemented in 2020. Nevertheless, nutrition is only described in the PDHPE syllabus as one of 14 topics to choose from.²³ The NSW Education Standards Authority²⁴ recommends time allocations to the primary syllabi and allows schools and teachers to decide how much time is spend per strand within the PDHPE syllabus. As there are eight strands in the current PDHPE syllabus, it may depend on the teacher's affinities and confidence levels with certain topics within the strands what subjects are discussed. A program called 'LiveLifeWell@School' has been implemented in NSW primary schools since 2008, recognising the need to address lifestyle behaviours that can lead to overweight in primary school aged children.²⁵ As part of the program teachers can access professional development opportunities relevant to nutrition education via specific modules, learning days and conferences. This program is important as teachers' knowledge about the subject of nutrition might not be sufficient and not meet the professional standards of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).²⁶

Additional to time and content demands, pre-service teacher education in PDHPE is required to cover theory and practical strands during teacher education programs, and is unlikely to offer adequate instructional time for gaining efficacy in presenting nutritional content. Investigating the requirements for a Bachelor of Education (primary) at one University in NSW as an example (see table 1), indicates that less than 10% of mandatory course content (two mandatory PDHPE courses) addressed components of nutrition and health status, with nutrition education specifically discussed in only one elective course, that could be chosen from 129 other elective courses.

Currently, the extent to which the existing nutrition curriculum is taught in NSW Primary schools is not known, nor how confident teachers feel teaching nutrition, or what materials/methods are used and how much time is allocated to teaching it. The current study aimed to explore teacher's attitude, perception, and application of nutrition education in NSW schools.

Methods

Survey

The survey was designed specifically to address study aims. It was developed in collaboration with three teachers, each with over 25 years of experience and two researchers experienced in primary school PDHPE education and transferred online using Qualtrics (Qualtrics, Provo, UT).

Participants were invited to complete the survey online. It comprised of a total of 29 questions, in five domains:

- 1) **Socio-demographics** (e.g. age, gender) and teaching experience, and in which kind of school they teach (i.e. government school, catholic school, or independent school)
- 2) **Teachers time-allocation** to the domains within PDHPE, of which Nutrition Education is a part.
- 3) **Content covered within nutrition-education** to explore what is currently taught in terms of nutrition and the teacher's attitude to nutrition education.
- 4) **Access to resources** to support the curriculum to teach nutrition and what materials are used in class. Also, how the school and parents are involved and if they see any barriers for teaching nutrition education was assessed.
- 5) **Educational games** used and if used, perceived usefulness in nutrition education.

Recruitment and participants

As this was an exploratory survey only, was to recruit a convenience sample of about 30 teachers. This was done via e-mail contacts (i.e. existing university/school contacts) and social media posts which contained a link to the online survey. Invitations to the survey were posted on both general and teacher-specific social media pages. All current NSW primary school teachers were eligible to participate. Consent was acquired at the survey start via a 'yes' or 'no' question, where 'no' generated an automatic exit from the survey.

Analysis

Quantitative and descriptive statistics were used to explore the data (means (M), standard deviations (SD)) and were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22 (IBM Corporation, 2013). Qualitative data (any answers to the open-ended questions) was not analysed using software as the sample size was too small. It was rather used to provide informative quotes throughout the manuscript and will be used to inform future intervention studies.

Results

A total of 33 teachers completed the online survey within two months; 84.9% (n=28) female, mean age 38.7 (SD 9.8, range from 24 to 61 years). Several teachers indicated teaching combination classes of up to 3 years in the same class. Teachers of children in grades 2-4 and 6 were most represented in this study sample. One-third of the participants had 16+ years of teaching experience (n=13), worked at schools with over 400 students (n=10) and indicated they worked for a government school (n=21).

On average, the teachers were unsure if the time allocated to the PDHPE curriculum was sufficient (M=3.03, SD 1.33) (on a scale of 1= definitely yes to 5=definitely not). Of the eight strands in the PDHPE curriculum, the most time was spent on 'Games and Sport'. The strand in which the topic 'Nutrition' is a component ('Personal Health Choices'), was ranked 4th on average. Exploring the time allocation within 'Personal Health Choices', the topic 'Nutrition' was ranked 2nd, after 'Making Decisions' (see table 2). Teachers scored a mean of 2.70 (SD 1.21) (on a scale of 1=definitely yes to 5=definitely not) when asked about the time spend on 'Nutrition'. Within the topic of 'Nutrition', teachers spent most time on 'Food choices for good health' and 'Balanced eating habits' and spent the least amount of time on 'Salt/sugar intake' and 'Saturated fats'. When asked about any other nutrition topics that are not mentioned in the syllabus, most teachers indicate also teaching about 'eating behaviour'(51.5%), 'distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy foods'(75.8%) and having a school garden (60.6%). Topics such as 'portion size' (19%) and 'carbohydrates, fats and protein' (19%) were least discussed in class (see table 3).

Out of the 33 teachers, 23 (72%) taught nutrition themselves and the rest indicated they allocate the topic to either a 'relief from face-to-face' (RFF) teacher or a guest speaker comes in. Most teachers (81.8%) use online information such as websites and games as resource materials to teach nutrition. Other popular materials are real foods (66.7%), a school garden (60.6%) and PowerPoint slides (48.5%). On average, the participants feel that the nutrition education materials are not up-to-date or sufficient (M=3.58, SD 1.2) (see table 4).

The mean interest in nutrition among the teachers in the study sample was 1.81 (SD 0.74) (on a scale of 1=very interested to 6=not at all interested), suggesting a strong interest overall. On average, 40 percent of the teachers who provided nutrition information to parents (60.1%), do so less than once a month via a school newsletter to the parents. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is extremely positive and 7 extremely negative, the teachers scored a mean of 2.39 (SD 1.30)

when asked about how they feel about integrating nutrition and health education into the math curriculum (see table 5). A majority of the teachers believe that ‘a lack of time’ (78.8%) is the greatest barrier to teaching nutrition in primary schools. In addition, 24.2% indicated not knowing enough about nutrition and 33.3% specified not having sufficient materials as a barrier (see table 4).

Discussion

Results of the current survey of 33 primary school teachers in NSW highlights that they commonly address nutrition in class when teaching from the ‘Personal Health Choices’ strand in the PDHPE syllabus. Nutrition was second to ‘making decisions’, indicating the teachers generally value nutrition education. However, the survey respondents reported being unsure whether the time allocated to the PDHPE syllabus allowed them enough time to specifically teach nutrition to their students. Lack of time, absence of sufficient resource materials and counteracting parents’ food related practices were the three most common barriers reported by the teachers.

Among the eight strands in the PDHPE curriculum, the ‘Personal Health Choices’ strand was the fourth most often strand reportedly addressed in class. The NSW Education Standards Authority²⁴ recommends spending 1.5-2.5 hours per week on all strands in the PDHPE syllabus, leaving limited time for teaching nutrition specifically. Previous studies have suggested class-room based nutrition education is only successful when taught over at least 10-15 hours per year.²⁷ Considering the 2.5 hours are to be divided over eight strands (20 minutes per strand) and six topics within the ‘Personal Health Choices’ strand, approximately three minutes per week, or two hours per year would be spent on the nutrition topic.

Importantly, results of the current survey indicated that teachers in this sample value nutrition in primary school education and believe it could be helpful in the prevention of obesity. Unfortunately, 80% of the participants indicated a lack of time as the greatest barrier to teaching nutrition. The same barrier was reported by Morgan and Hansen²⁸ when examining the barriers to teaching good quality physical education in school. One teacher reflected how ‘Australian children are already slipping down the ranks in English and maths’ and how this will take priority every day (see all comments in table 6). A similar conclusion was made by the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics²⁹, where it was reported that improving the quality and outcomes of traditional core subjects such as mathematics and science put significant pressure on teachers, leaving little time for additional curriculum such as nutrition.

In agreement with this, a participant in the present survey wrote: ‘We are already incredibly time poor and with so many distractions and interruptions, things never go to plan’. This reported lack of time is quite concerning for the future, as the topic of nutrition will have to compete for time with other important topics such as English and Mathematics, in an already overcrowded curriculum.³⁰

It is therefore important that any future initiative or intervention to address nutrition education in primary schools respects the substantial time-constraints teachers already experience. One possible approach is to use a cross-curricular approach.³¹ A review of teaching approaches and strategies in primary schools to promote healthy eating concluded that taking a cross-curricular approach was one of the most effective methods.³² The teachers in the current study had a generally positive attitude towards potential cross-curricular integration (e.g. the integration of nutrition and health education into the maths curriculum). However, one teacher commented that if ‘such an integration happens, implementers should be very careful to maintain the integrity of subject outcomes.’ Any future programs aimed at nutrition education and implemented in primary schools will need to ensure high quality within the specific lessons. The NSW program LiveLifeWell@School found paid training days, service training modules and LiveLifeWell@School conferences for teachers appears to be effective in motivating teachers to improve their knowledge on health.

Another barrier frequently mentioned was a lack of sufficient materials and they indicated that materials available to them currently are probably not up-to-date nor sufficient. The NSW Education Standards Authority does list some reference materials, the most recent book was published in 1997 and the websites are generic information websites such as the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating website³³, which would not help the teacher develop an interactive and cross-curricular lesson plan. While there are more helpful website/initiatives available to the teachers³¹, they are not always subject to quality control or linked to syllabus outcomes. In addition, they are not centrally located and not easily accessible for teachers. It was previously reported among 102 Californian (USA) teachers that most of them are unaware of resources available to them.³⁴ Having easy access to adequate reference materials in one place is important for teachers to teach adequately about nutrition, as it is often a topic they do not know much about.

Finally, about 27% of the teachers in the current study also consider that parents may be a barrier to teaching nutrition education successfully and believe that parents should be the ones teach their children about nutrition.

One teacher commented that often parents are ‘counterproductive by packing unhealthy snacks and foods’ and another mentioned parental choices in packed lunch boxes ‘having an impact on the success of nutrition teaching’. A lack of nutrition knowledge and positive health attitude from the parents has been shown to be related to child diet quality.³⁵ It should therefore be emphasized that nutrition education in primary schools would only be one piece of the puzzle and other stakeholders in the child’s life, namely parents, should be involved in any nutrition education or intervention study if it is to be successful. A systematic review by Dudley, Cotton and Peralta³² on teaching strategies to promote healthy eating, concluded that positive impacts on fruit and vegetable consumption among primary school children was observed when parental involvement was imbedded with nutrition education strategies in class. In the current survey, 60% of teachers indicated providing nutrition information to parents, of whom 50% did so at least once a month via newsletter. However, a scoping review by Peralta, Dudley and Cotton³¹ on nutrition education resources found that only three out of nine included Australian studies engaged parents in nutrition classes. Furthermore, it is concluded in that review that merely providing information to the parents (i.e. via a newsletter) is not likely to be sufficient. It is therefore recommended that parents are involved actively in any nutrition education that occurs in primary school, for example through cooking classes with their children.

In addition to time spent on nutrition education in class, the quality of the education is equally important. About 24% of the teachers in the current survey felt that their lack of knowledge about nutrition is a barrier to them teaching nutrition in class. A lack of knowledge or interest could also lead to inadequate teaching. Studies have previously noted that teachers must be adequately trained, motivated and armed with sufficient knowledge to teach nutrition effectively.^{36,37} This will enable teachers to educate nutrition accurately and teach their students interactively. In a nutrition knowledge and self-efficacy survey among 59 primary school teachers in California, US, it was found that the teachers did not have adequate levels of nutrition knowledge nor the skills to adequately teach nutrition to their students.³⁸ Similar to the finding of the current study, an assessment of nutrition education in New York state classrooms found that teachers consider nutrition education important and they are willing to teach nutrition. However, the authors call for support in integrating nutrition topics, methods of instruction and availability of resources.³⁹ Instructions and resources have ranged from small group training sessions to extensive teacher courses over several weeks. However, it remains unclear what level of support is appropriate and resources teachers desire and find most useful.

In order to overcome the teacher's time constraints, cross-curricular approaches to teaching nutrition have been found to be highly effective. Integrating nutrition education into core learning areas such as Mathematics and Science provides an opportunity to make classes more relevant to the students as they will also learn daily life skills.⁴⁰ Cross-curricular approaches to instruction have been found to lower children's sugar consumption and increase fruit- and vegetable consumption.³²

This study had some strengths and limitations. To the best of the author's knowledge, the current study is the first to survey teachers about nutrition education in NSW primary schools. However, the sample of teachers in this study was on average very positive toward nutrition education and it is likely only those with a prior interest into health and/or nutrition would have participated, which could have resulted in a biased sample. Furthermore, the study has a small sample size as it was intended as an exploratory study to identify whether there was an interest in the topic and a need for further research. Lastly, the authors recognize that treating Likert scales responses as continuous variables is a limitation. However we feel this usage is appropriate as scales were used to define the sample involved, with no testing of statistical inference or relationships between variables undertaken.

In conclusion, in order to be effective, nutrition education must be taught regularly and resources should be adequate. In light of the time pressures in schools, integration across the curriculum is recommended as a method of increasing exposure to nutrition content. The currently available resources for teachers do not allow less knowledgeable teachers to sufficiently and adequately construct nutrition education lessons. More easily accessible, integrated, practical and applicable resources are needed in order to ensure high quality nutrition education is taught at a state-wide equal and adequate level. Professional development aimed at integration strategies and presentation of higher quality nutrition based lessons is also suggested to improve the level of nutrition education in primary schools.

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Tables

Table 1: Units to be attained for a Bachelor of education (primary) at a University in NSW, Australia

	Level	Units*	General health units	PDHPE units	Nutrition specific units
Core courses (all units mandatory)	1000	90	0	10	<1
	2000	80	0	10	<1
	3000	50	0	0	0
	4000	30	0	0	0
Directed courses* (total of 40 units to be chosen)	1000	570	0	20	0
	2000	310	20	40	10
	3000	170	10	0	0
	4000	250	0	40	0

* 1 course = 10 units (with the exception of: Introduction to Biology II = 20 units)

** Students must attain 40 units from a total of 1300 units (= 129 courses), divided over 11 discipline depth study areas, one of which is Health and Physical Education

Table 2: Rankings of time allocated in the PDHPE syllabus

Rank	PDHPE syllabus strands ^A	Mean (SD) ^A	Personal Health Choices topics ^B	Mean (SD) ^B
1.	Games and Sport	2.52 (1.81)	Making decisions	1.47 (SD 0.84)
2.	Active Lifestyle	3.59 (1.83)	Nutrition	2.75 (SD 1.22)
3.	Interpersonal relationships	3.63 (1.64)	Preventative measures	4.00 (SD 1.44)
4.	Personal Health Choices	3.81 (1.64)	Health services and products	4.28 (SD 1.02)
5.	Growth and development	4.47 (2.16)	Drug use	4.34 (SD 1.75)
6.	Safe living	4.81 (1.64)	Environmental Health	4.16 (SD 1.67)
7.	Dance	6.44 (1.56)		
8.	Gymnastics	6.78 (1.77)		

^A Survey question: Please rank the following Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) strands in order of how much time you usually spend on them in class. Rank 1 being the most time and Rank 8 the least.

^B Survey question: Please rank the following subject matters from the Personal Health Choices (PDHPE) strand in order of how much time you usually spend on them in class? Rank 1 being the most time and Rank 6 the least.

Question in survey		Mean (SD)
Do you feel that the current time allocated to Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (1.5-2.5h/week is recommended by the NSW Education Standards Authority) is sufficient and allows you to spend enough time teaching about nutrition? ^A		3.03 (1.33)
Do you feel the resources available to you (from the NSW Education Standards Authority) are sufficient and up-to-date? ^A		3.58 (1.20)
Do you believe more nutrition education could help in the prevention of (childhood) obesity? ^A		1.88 (0.99)
Do you feel that you spend sufficient time on all subject matters in the Personal Health Choices strand? ^A	Making decisions Nutrition Preventative measures Health services and products Drug use Environmental health	2.21 (1.17) 2.70 (1.21) 2.42 (1.06) 2.85 (1.06) 2.58 (1.25) 2.76 (1.23)
How important do you think it is to teach about nutrition in Primary School? ^B		82.60 (15.50)
Statement: I am interested in nutrition ^C		1.79 (0.74)
Statement: I model healthy eating in class (e.g. by eating healthy snacks) ^C		1.91 (1.21)
When teaching about nutrition, how much time do you spent during the school year on the following Nutrition subject matter topics in your class? ^D	Food choices and good health Balanced eating habits Variety of food choices Effects of nutrients on the body Fast food Energy intake/expenditure Lifestyle risk factors Salt/sugar intake Saturated fats	2.61 (0.97) 2.88 (1.02) 2.94 (0.89) 2.97 (0.92) 3.24 (0.83) 3.24 (1.00) 3.27 (0.84) 3.61 (1.03) 3.76 (0.90)
How important do you think it is to add the following Nutrition Education topics to the Primary School curriculum? ^E	Nutrition label reading skills Eating behaviour Portion sizes Carbohydrates, proteins and fats Distinguish between healthy vs unhealthy foods Cooking skills Ability to recognize different foods School garden AGHE	2.45 (1.06) 1.88 (0.86) 2.18 (0.81) 2.67 (0.67) 1.45 (0.67) 2.76 (1.12) 2.21 (1.12) 2.52 (1.03) 2.42 (1.00)

^A Scale: 1=Definitely yes; 2=Probably yes; 3=Might or might not; 4=Probably not; 5=Definitely not

^B Scale: 0-100, where 0= not important at all; 100= very important

^C Scale: 1=Strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Somewhat agree; 4=Neither agree nor disagree; 5=Somewhat disagree; 6=Disagree; 7=Strongly disagree

^D Scale: 1=A great deal; 2=A lot; 3=A moderate amount; 4=A little; 5=None at all

^E Scale: 1=Extremely important; 2=Very important; 3=Moderately important; 4=Slightly important; 5=Not at all important

485 *Table 4: Multiple choice questions*

Survey question	Question options	n (% of study sample)
Who usually teaches about nutrition in your school/class?	I always do it myself RFF teacher Guest speakers Other/unknown	23 (69.7%) 3 (9.1%) 1 (3.0%) 6 (18.2%)
What materials do you usually use to teach about nutrition?	School garden Video/film PowerPoint slides Books/magazines Websites/online games Presentations by students Real foods Excursions Food diary	20 (60.6%) 16 (48.5%) 16 (48.5%) 11 (33.3%) 27 (81.8%) 5 (15.2%) 22 (66.7%) 4 (12.1%) 7 (21.2%)
Do you or your school provide the parents with nutrition information?	Yes, I do Yes, the school does Yes, both the school and I do No	2 (6.1%) 17 (51.5%) 1 (3.0%) 13 (39.4%)
On average, how often is nutrition information provided to the parents?	About once a week About 2-3 a month About once a month Less than once a month I am not sure	2 (10.0%) 5 (25.0%) 3 (15.0%) 8 (40.0%) 2 (10.0%)
How is the nutrition information provided to the parents?	On information days Via the newsletter	4 (20%) 20 (100%)
What do you think could be the greatest barriers to teaching Nutrition adequately and sufficiently in primary school?	Lack of time I don't know enough about nutrition I don't have sufficient materials Children are not interested in nutrition My school is not supportive I believe it is the role of the parents to teach children about nutrition	26 (78.8%) 8 (24.2%) 11 (33.3%) 3 (9.1%) 2 (9.1%) 9 (27.3%)

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Table 5: Educational games (ordinal questions)

Question in survey		Mean (SD)
How useful do you think educational games are to teach... ^A	Numeracy in general	1.56 (0.62)
	Number and algebra	1.63 (0.71)
	Statistics and probability	1.72 (0.74)
	Health	1.94 (0.88)
	Nutrition	1.97 (0.85)
	Volumes and shapes	1.88 (0.74)
Do you think educational games are in general... ^B	Useful	1.70 (0.81)
	Distractive	4.58 (1.56)
	Evidence based	2.67 (1.05)
	Effective	2.03 (0.82)
	Easily available	2.97 (1.31)

^A Scale: 1=Extremely useful; 2=Moderately useful; 3=Slightly useful; 4=Neither useful nor useless; 5=Slightly useless; 6=Moderately useless; 7=Extremely useless

^B Scale: 1=Strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Somewhat agree; 4=Neither agree nor disagree; 5=Somewhat disagree; 6=Disagree; 7=Strongly disagree

Table 2: Selected teacher's Comments

Parental choices in lunch boxes have an impact on the success of nutrition teaching
Sometimes parents are counter productive - packing unhealthy snacks and foods even though they are aware of good nutrition
There is not enough time in the day, especially dealing with more social and emotional issues than ever before. We are also expected to do more and more jobs that parents should be taking responsibility for.
We are already incredibly time poor and with so many distractions and interruptions, things never go to plan. I only had my class for 2 hrs today, 2 hrs yesterday and 3 hrs on Tuesday. What isn't accounted in these times (recommended teaching time) are practices for presentations, assemblies, things like swim school, scripture, behaviour management, social situations, PBL, Kids Matter, Library etc.
I think teachers want to teach more about nutrition but we simply don't have enough time in the day to properly cover it. We're constantly told Australia is slipping down the ranks in English and Maths and so this takes priority every day.