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Contributing author:

Chapter 6: “Nutrition Communicators Read and Interpret Research”

Virginia C. Stage is a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist, researcher, and educator with expertise in child nutrition, education, and behavior change. Dr. Stage is currently an Associate Professor of Nutrition Science at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC where she has taught courses in Nutrition Science, Pediatric Nutrition, Nutrition Education, and Research Methods at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Dr. Stage has specific training and expertise in school-based intervention research using quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Over the past 10+ years, Dr. Stage has worked with 300+ P-8 teachers nationally on how to integrate nutrition education into their classrooms. She regularly uses these experiences to teach students in her classroom about evidence-based approaches. In addition, she also mentors undergraduate and graduate students through individual and team-based research projects in the community. Numerous students in her lab have published their work in respected peer-reviewed journals and have been recognized locally and nationally for their work.

What is one piece of advice you would like to share with current and future nutrition communicators?

How we communicate as a society is ever evolving. As communicators of accurate information about nutrition, we must continually stay abreast of not only the most-up-to-date nutrition science in our practice areas, but also how the public communicates and desires to receive this information. If we are to be heard and respected as reliable sources of nutrition information, we must understand how the communities we work communicate and use these same methods. This includes understanding technology, cultural differences, practicing different forms of writing (e.g. OpEd versus tweet), and evaluating the impact of our communication. As a student, take the time to study and develop the skills you need to be an effective communicator. Your future patients, clients, communities will thank you.

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