



**Asap**

Local Food  
Strong Farms  
Healthy Communities

**Addressing Dietetic Internship  
Competencies Through Local  
Food and Farm to School**

# Addressing Dietetic Internship Competencies Through Local Food and Farm to School

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*"It (the Local Food and Farm to School Education Project) will have a huge impact no matter what field in nutrition I go into. Eating local and supporting your community is so important no matter where you are!" [WCU Dietetic Intern]*

Dear Health Professional,

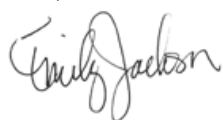
ASAP began our work more than a decade ago, when local food and Farm to School were brand new concepts. A team of former educators and farmers, we knew that most children and adults weren't connected with the source of their food. We believed that rebuilding the connection between the grocery store shelf and farmer could create healthier communities.

Fast forward 10 years, and we've seen first-hand the true power of Farm to School. (As defined by ASAP, Farm to School includes four components/experiences: school gardens, classroom cooking with local food, farm field trips, and local procurement in the cafeteria.) We've seen children and their families try new foods and change their eating habits after participating in Farm to School activities in the classroom and eating fresh local foods in the cafeteria. In other words, we've seen folks learn healthy eating behaviors while building connections to agricultural heritage and to communities. **ASAP believes firmly that local food education can be one of the best tools in health professionals' and educators' toolboxes to introduce and promote healthy eating habits to children and adults.**

Seeing the impact of the Farm to School and local food movements on schools and communities and desiring to sustain these efforts, a concept emerged. Why not incorporate these engaging and educational strategies (school gardens, taste tests, cooking in the classroom, farm field trips, etc.) into university programs for future teachers and nutrition professionals? In 2011, ASAP's Farm to School Program, in collaboration with Western Carolina University and Lenoir-Rhyne University in Western North Carolina, implemented this innovative "upstream" approach: the "Local Food and Farm to School Education Project." **The project's main goal is to institutionalize local food and Farm to School experiences and training into undergraduate and graduate curricula for education, and nutrition and dietetics students and dietetic interns.** That way, they are able and motivated to model healthy behavior and integrate healthy food activities into their professional work. We've found that after participating in hands-on learning experiences of gardening and cooking with local food, university students are more likely to integrate Farm to School activities into their professional practices, thereby helping to sustain local food and Farm to School efforts.

As part of the project, we're excited to present this alignment of local food and Farm to School activities with the Dietetic Internship Core Competencies (see Table 1: Local Food and Farm to School (F2S) Activities for Food Service Management and Table 2: Local Food and Farm to School (F2S) Activities for the Community Nutrition Practicum). **We hope that you will be one of many Dietetic Internship Directors from across the country to take the opportunity to encourage your students and preceptors to address the core competencies through local food and Farm to School activities.** Once integrated into your program, we look forward to hearing feedback about the opportunities and challenges encountered.

Best,



Emily Jackson  
ASAP Program Director

## Executive Summary

Since 2011, ASAP's Farm to School Program—in collaboration with Western Carolina University and Lenoir-Rhyne University in Western North Carolina—has taken an innovate “upstream” approach to further disseminate and sustain local food and Farm to School (F2S) efforts. The **Local Food and Farm to School Education Project** institutionalizes local food and F2S experiences and training into undergraduate and graduate curricula for education and nutrition and dietetics students and dietetic interns.

Through the Local Food and Farm to School Education Project, a total of 170 dietetic interns (DIs) and nutrition undergraduate students have completed ASAP's comprehensive local food and F2S training thus far. Furthermore, nine DIs have completed food service management and community nutrition competencies through local food and F2S activities at their respective rotation sites (with at least four more committed to such experiences during the 2013-2014 school year).

DIs have cited numerous benefits of participation in the program, including: unique rotation placement for supervised practice hours, civic engagement, opportunities to be a leader among their peers and in the community, and meaningful application of didactic knowledge to nutrition education and food service management projects. DIs report they gained hands-on experience in teaching about local food, learned how to effectively educate and work with children, and gained an understanding of how to integrate and work with community partners, skills not always taught in academic programs.

Now two years into the project, we're documenting these successes and looking to share these findings outside of Western North Carolina. In the following pages, you'll find specific ways in which local food and F2S activities can address core competencies for both the food service management rotation and the community nutrition rotation for the Dietetic Internship. These suggested activities are based on project experience and our team's expertise and are meant to work in a variety of communities and programs. They are not exhaustive lists and can certainly be adapted to specific settings.

## About ASAP

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. Our work includes publishing a yearly *Local Food Guide* for the Southern Appalachians, identifying and defining “local” food through our Appalachian Grown™ branding and certification campaign, and running the Growing Minds Farm to School program. To learn more, visit [www.asapconnections.org](http://www.asapconnections.org).

## About ASAP's Growing Minds Farm to School Program

ASAP's Farm to School program provides resources and training to farmers, teachers, chefs, school nutrition staff, parents, and other community members to encourage schools to provide the experiential education that will ensure children know where their food comes from and develop lifelong healthy eating habits. Part of that hands-on work includes matching chefs to classrooms for cooking demonstrations that introduce children to the wonders of locally grown foods. ASAP serves as the Southeast Regional Lead for the National Farm to School Network. To learn more, visit [www.growing-minds.org](http://www.growing-minds.org).



## Alignment of Local Food and Farm to School with the Dietetic Internship Core Competencies

**Table 1.**  
**Local Food and Farm to School (F2S) Activities for the Food Service Management Practicum**

2012 CRD Competency	Local Food and F2S Activity/Assignment
<p><b>CRD 1.2</b> Apply evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews and scientific literature (such as the ADA Evidence Analysis Library and Evidence-based Nutrition Practice Guidelines, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews and the U.S. - Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, National Guideline Clearinghouse Web sites) in the nutrition care process and model and other areas of dietetics practice.</p>	<p>Review and evaluate school/worksite/institutional wellness policies and/or programs. Integrate language related to procurement, promotion, and support of local foods.</p> <p>Write a white paper (or other report) based on guidelines, reviews, literature, and best practices on how local food education can increase healthy eating behaviors.</p>
<p><b>CRD 1.3</b> Justify programs, products, services, and care using appropriate evidence or data.</p>	<p>Examine the facility to identify equipment that would assist food service staff in preparing and serving local and fresh foods. Research, prepare, and present a succinct proposal to justify equipment purchase.</p>
<p><b>CRD 1.4</b> Evaluate emerging research for application in dietetics practice.</p>	<p>Complete a local food or F2S literature review related to food service and/or Child Nutrition Programs. Literature review includes identifying research articles related to the topic, reviewing articles for evidence, compiling results, and synthesizing/summarizing findings.</p>
<p><b>CRD 1.5</b> Conduct projects using appropriate research methods, ethical procedures and data analysis.</p>	<p>Identify or develop a recipe that uses a local food item that would be feasible to feature on a school or other food service program menu. Prepare recipe and conduct a taste test, and evaluate the recipe with the taste test population.</p> <p>Based on needs of site placement, write a grant proposal to fund a F2S program or a component of a F2S program (such as a farm field trip, a school garden, or a taste test).</p> <p>Conduct a plate waste study that examines plate waste before local foods are integrated into the menu and after to assess what impact local foods have on plate waste.</p> <p>Determine quality standards for a local food and design a study and data collection form to monitor and collect data on the quality of the local food. Compile data and prepare a report on findings along with recommendations for quality improvement.</p>
<p><b>CRD 2.2</b> Demonstrate professional writing skills in preparing professional communications. (Guidance: examples include</p>	<p>Prepare and submit an abstract based on a local food or F2S project to an academic or organizational conference</p>

research manuscripts, project proposals, education materials, policies and procedures)	(such as FNCE AND). Create a monthly local food or F2S article to be included in a school or community newsletter, blog, or other social media.
<b>CRD 2.5</b> Demonstrate active participation, teamwork and contributions in group settings.	Work collaboratively with teachers, food service personnel, farmers, school wellness committee, and other community members or F2S coordinators on local food efforts if applicable.  Organize farm field trips for teachers and their students or food service personnel.  If in a school setting, work to build a connection between the classroom and cafeteria. For example, organize a class trip to the cafeteria during non-meal hours to interview the cafeteria staff or learn about how locally grown foods are incorporated (or not) into school meals.
<b>CRD 2.8</b> Apply leadership skills to achieve desired outcomes.	Explore and initiate new local food or F2S activities that reach an interested audience or serve a need of the school community or food service establishment community.
<b>CRD 2.9</b> Participate in professional and community organizations.	Volunteer at a farmers market or other community organization that supports local farmers.
<b>CRD 3.2</b> Demonstrate effective communications skills in a variety of formats. (Guidance: formats include oral, print, visual, electronic and mass media methods for maximizing client education, employee training and marketing)	Teach local food or F2S cooking lessons and/or garden lessons.  Create and maintain a local food or F2S bulletin board.  Deliver a local food or F2S in-service for food service staff, teachers, parents, or community members. Identify what skills/knowledge a group would like to acquire related to local food or F2S and provide a learning experience on those skills/knowledge.  Create local food or F2S informational and/or marketing resources targeted to specific audiences (such as a newsletter, recipe cards, lesson plans, list of local farmers markets, farmer profiles, and bulletin boards).
<b>CRD 3.5</b> Coordinate procurement, production, distribution and service of goods and services. (Guidance: students/interns should demonstrate and promote responsible use of resources including employees, money, time, water, energy, food and disposable goods)	Identify options for procurement of local food items.  Conduct a cost analysis comparing local food items to non-local food items, by season.

<p><b>CRD 3.6</b> Develop and evaluate recipes, formulas and menus for acceptability and affordability that accommodate the cultural diversity and health needs of various populations, groups and individuals.</p>	<p>Identify an existing recipe where a local food item could replace a non-local food item and/or develop a recipe that uses a local food item that would be feasible to feature on a school or other food service program menu. Prepare recipe and conduct a taste test, and evaluate the recipe with the taste test population.</p> <p>Revise a menu where local food items replace non-local food items and evaluate for acceptability and affordability.</p>
<p><b>CRD 4.1</b> Participate in management of human resources.</p>	<p>Coordinate and manage volunteers for local food or F2S activities, such as a gardening activity or taste test.</p>
<p><b>CRD 4.2</b> Perform management functions related to safety, security and sanitation that affect employees, customers, patients, facilities and food.</p>	<p>Review and become familiar with food safety guidelines for cooking with local foods, cooking with foods from school gardens, preparing taste tests, and cooking in the classroom.</p>
<p><b>CRD 4.8</b> Conduct feasibility studies for products, programs or services with consideration of costs and benefits.</p>	<p>Conduct a feasibility study for sourcing and purchasing local foods in place of non-local foods, with consideration of cost and benefits.</p>
<p><b>CRD 4.9</b> Analyze financial data to assess utilization of resources.</p>	<p>Conduct a cost comparison of a standardized recipe to a standardized recipe using locally sourced food item(s).</p> <p>Investigate purchasing options for local food by reviewing vendor specifications and price sheets.</p>
<p><b>CRD 4.10</b> Develop a plan to provide or develop a product, program or service that includes a budget, staffing needs, equipment and supplies.</p>	<p>Prepare a bid for a new piece of equipment that would assist in incorporating more local and fresh foods on the menu. Identify need/requirement for piece; discuss potential concerns with equipment (size, space, electricity, water, cleaning, service agreements, cost, time to recover cost, etc.). Bid should address appropriate action steps indicating organizational understanding, budget, and goals.</p>

**Table 2.**  
**Local Food and Farm to School (F2S) Activities for the Community Nutrition Practicum**

2012 CRD Competency	Local Food and F2S Activity/Assignment
<p><b>CRD 1.2</b>            Apply evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews and scientific literature (such as the ADA Evidence Analysis Library and Evidence-based Nutrition Practice Guidelines, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, National Guideline Clearinghouse Web sites) in the nutrition care process and model and other areas of dietetics practice.</p>	<p>Review and evaluate school/worksite/institutional wellness policies and/or programs. Integrate language related to procurement, promotion, and support of local foods.</p> <p>Write a white paper (or other report) based on guidelines, reviews, literature, and best practices on how local food education can increase healthy eating behaviors.</p>
<p><b>CRD 1.3</b>            Justify programs, products, services, and care using appropriate evidence or data.</p>	<p>Based on needs of site placement, write a grant proposal to fund a F2S program, a component of a F2S program (such as a farm field trip, a school garden, or a taste test).</p>
<p><b>CRD 1.4</b>            Evaluate emerging research for application in dietetics practice.</p>	<p>Complete a local food or F2S related literature review on a topic relevant to site placement. Literature review includes identifying research articles related to the topic, reviewing articles for evidence, compiling results, and synthesizing/summarizing findings.</p>
<p><b>CRD 1.5</b>            Conduct projects using appropriate research methods, ethical procedures and data analysis.</p>	<p>Evaluate the impact a F2S program (or component of a F2S program) has on the targeted population.</p>
<p><b>CRD 2.2</b>            Demonstrate professional writing skills in preparing professional communications. (Guidance: examples include research manuscripts, project proposals, education materials, policies and procedures)</p>	<p>Prepare and submit an abstract based on a local food or F2S project to an academic or organizational conference (such as FNCE AND).</p> <p>Create local food or F2S informational and/or marketing resources targeted to specific audiences (such as a newsletter, recipe cards, lesson plans, list of local farmers markets, farmer profiles, and bulletin boards).</p>
<p><b>CRD 2.3</b>            Design, implement and evaluate presentations to a target audience. (Guidance: a quality presentation considers life experiences, cultural diversity and educational background of the target audience)</p>	<p>Design, coordinate, implement, and evaluate a local food or F2S presentation (may include a cooking demonstration, taste test, or other hands on activity) to a target audience.</p>



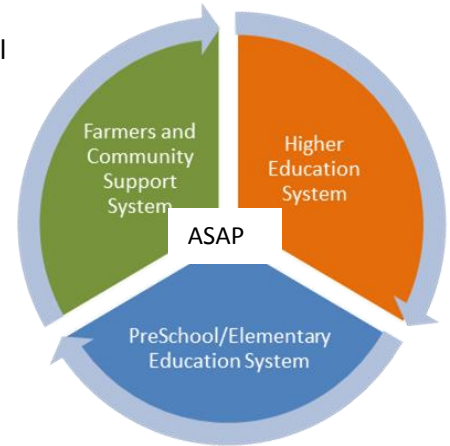
<p><b>CRD 2.4</b> Use effective education and counseling skills to facilitate behavior change.</p>	<p>Teach local food or F2S cooking classes and/or garden lessons to target audiences.</p> <p>Conduct local food or F2S taste tests with target audiences.</p> <p>Lead farm field trips with target audiences.</p> <p>Conduct a farmers market tour and/or taste test at a farmers market.</p>
<p><b>CRD 2.5</b> Demonstrate active participation, teamwork and contributions in group settings.</p>	<p>Work collaboratively with F2S coordinators if applicable, community partners (such as Cooperative Extension), teachers, cafeteria staff, and farmers.</p> <p>Organize farm field trips for teachers and their students or site placement employees or a community group.</p> <p>Work to build community connections that strengthen a F2S program and its sustainability.</p>
<p><b>CRD 2.8</b> Apply leadership skills to achieve desired outcomes.</p>	<p>Explore and initiate new local food or F2S activities that reach an interested audience or serve a need of the community.</p>
<p><b>CRD 2.9</b> Participate in professional and community organizations.</p>	<p>Volunteer at a farmers market or other community organization that supports local farmers.</p>
<p><b>CRD 3.2</b> Demonstrate effective communications skills in a variety of formats. (Guidance: formats include oral, print, visual, electronic and mass media methods for maximizing client education, employee training and marketing)</p>	<p>Teach local food or F2S cooking lessons and/or garden lessons to target audiences.</p> <p>Conduct local food or F2S taste tests with target audiences.</p> <p>Create local food or F2S informational and/or marketing resources targeted to specific audiences (such as a newsletter, recipe cards, lesson plans, list of local farmers markets, farmer profiles, and bulletin boards).</p> <p>Deliver a F2S in-service for a target audience (teachers, school food service, parents, etc.). Identify what skills/knowledge a group would like to acquire related to F2S and provide a learning experience on those skills/knowledge.</p> <p>Conduct a farmers market tour and/or taste test at a farmers market.</p>

<p><b>CRD 3.3</b> Develop and deliver products, programs or services that promote consumer health, wellness and lifestyle management. (Guidance: students/interns should consider health messages and interventions that integrate the consumer's desire for taste, convenience and economy with the need for nutrition, food safety)</p>	<p>Teach F2S cooking lessons and/or garden lessons.</p> <p>Create and maintain a F2S bulletin board.</p> <p>Deliver a F2S in-service for food service staff, teachers, or parents. Identify what skills/knowledge a group would like to acquire related to F2S and provide a learning experience on those skills/knowledge.</p>
<p><b>CRD 4.3</b> Participate in public policy activities, including both legislative and regulatory initiatives.</p>	<p>Research and review national and state policies related to Farm to School.</p> <p>Depending on the year and time of year, research and review the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act as it relates to local food systems.</p> <p>Investigate food policy councils and attend a food policy council meeting in the area.</p> <p>Review and evaluate worksite/institutional wellness policies. Make recommendations related to increasing healthy eating behaviors that include purchasing, promoting, and supporting local foods.</p>

## Local Food and Farm to School Education Project

The Local Food and Farm to School Education Project (LFFSEP) integrates local food and Farm to School experiences and training into undergraduate and graduate curricula for education students, nutrition and dietetics students, and dietetic interns. The local food experiences and training builds the capacity of future teachers, registered dietitians, and health professionals to incorporate local food and farm based experiences in their work. Building capacity of future educators and health professionals results in healthier children and communities.

Beginning with a pilot project in 2009, and in collaboration with Western Carolina University (WCU), the community of Jackson County, and Jackson County Public Schools, ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) began implementing the Local Food and Farm to School Education Project with undergraduate education and nutrition and dietetics students. The project has since grown to include dietetic interns at WCU and Lenoir Rhyne University as well as a collaboration with Mountain Projects and its Head Start Centers, area farmers, parents, Cooperative Extension, chefs, and other community members. Rather than rely on existing teachers and dietitians to become interested in local food education, ASAP's strategy is to work "upstream" and integrate local food education into the academic coursework of undergraduate education and nutrition and dietetics students and dietetic interns.



This project models how local food education can be implemented in a university setting, demonstrates how local food education dynamically increases children's interest in healthy food, and provides engaging teaching methods. The modeling created by this project is experiential; undergraduate students have the opportunity to observe how local food education impacts children and adults, learn about Farm to School implementation, and develop confidence to conduct local food activities. Through experiences with local food and hands-on education, undergraduate students will ideally be more likely to incorporate these approaches into their future professional practices.

### The LFFSEP includes the following main components:

- Local Food and Farm to School training – day-long trainings, one for undergraduate/graduate students and one for dietetic interns, implemented for the unique needs of each group of students.
- Local food and Farm to School experiences integrated into undergraduate curricula (through class presentations, activities, research projects, and service-learning requirements).
- Local Food and Farm to School "Learning Labs" – local elementary schools and preschools where university students can experience local food and Farm to School activities on a regular basis were established.
- Opportunities for dietetic interns to integrate local food experiences into their rotations or volunteer requirements (See *Addressing Dietetic Internship Competencies Through Local Food and Farm to School*).