GREG E. POPOVICH, School of Exercise Science & Athletic Training, West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, WV, 26201, & KRISTY D. HENSON, School of Science & Technology, Fairmont State University, Fairmont, WV, 26554. Teaching nutrition concepts using pop culture: why zombies crave brains.

Recently, the allure of zombie culture has found its way into innovative teaching of biology and medical courses. In the current example, zombies are used to facilitate understanding of applied nutritional biochemistry. Our purpose is to evaluate the benefit of incorporating zombie lore into the delivery of a lecture on the inflammatory cascade as it relates to the essential fatty acids. We hypothesize that given the popularity of zombies and dystopian/apocalyptic environments, that intertwining nutritional concepts with these scenarios will enhance interest and attention, hence improving learning. The presentations were offered in nutrition or anatomy and physiology. The class compositions represented a breadth of majors. This audience was selected to assure minimal baseline knowledge on the topic of essential fatty acids and thusly maximize potential learning effect. Half of the students received a normal (i.e., non-zombie) lecture while half received the same information but as it relates to zombies and a zombie apocalypse. Learning was assessed using a five-question pre-test and post-test. Content-related questions were multiple choice with four options each. Preliminary findings were as follows: the pooled pre-test average for both groups was 34%; the post-test average was 90%. The mean score increase preversus post-test in both groups was dramatic and comparable (57% non-zombie vs 51% zombie). The vast majority of students (approximately 75%) in both groups indicated a moderate or higher level of interest in zombies. Following testing of additional groups, further analysis will test for significance between groups and correlations based upon basic demographics and interest in nutrition and zombie lore.