



Tips for Teaching Local Food Literacy in the Classroom

Tipsheet #1 in our Local Food Literacy in Ontario Schools Series

Overview

- Food skills are extremely valuable. Local food literacy education at school can engage and excite students about food, and help young people learn how to: cook from scratch, grow their own food, navigate a grocery store, and understand the complexities of the food system.
- Local food can be used as an engaging approach to many different subject areas (from math to social studies to food and nutrition).
- A critical part of local food literacy is knowing how to make meaning of the complex food system.



FoodShare Field to Table Schools' Top 5 tips for teaching local food literacy in schools:

1. Highlight **vegetables and fruits** whenever possible, which often means integrating them into well-known recipes that students love.
2. Broaden culinary horizons with new ingredients, while at the same time, honour the **cultural importance** of the foods we choose and the foods we eat at home.
3. **Choose local food** whenever possible, but also understand that importing is often necessary in a chilly winter climate and variety is the spice of life.
4. Highlight the benefits of **ethically or sustainably raised and grown food**, but understand that affordability and accessibility are key.
5. Understand and discuss the long-term systems change needed in our current food system, but always end with an uplifting discussion around **what we can do to make positive change**.

The food system is complex! Local food literacy education involves many but's, also's & and's.

Ideas for celebrating Local Food in the classroom:



- Events like the **Great Big Crunch** – where everyone crunches into an apple or carrot at the same time: <http://foodshare.net/program/crunch/>
- **Special Guests** (e.g. beekeeper or farmer or someone who owns a grocery store to talk about food from their perspective or experience)
- Visits from **grandparents** for inter-generational perspective



Elements of successful Local Food Literacy programs:

- **Teacher champions** (projects that are initiated by or come from school staff / school board staff)
- **Strong administrative and school board support**
- **Good relationships with producers / farmers** – go to farmers' markets with students or on your own to build relationships! You can then purchase local food and even invite farmers to come in to classroom to speak.
- **Get students cooking, growing, tasting**
- **Flexibility and creativity**
- **Have a connection with community partners**

Tip for High Schools: Use food and agriculture to help **build youth employment skills** (develop classroom workshops and projects; use greenhouses and urban farm spaces; or employ youth in the summer).

One local product can lead to many curriculum connections:

Tool/Skill: Learn how a garlic press is used.

Lingo: Explain the culinary terms *sauté* and *mince*.

Tool/Skill: Try using a wok to sauté some crushed garlic for making a stir-fry.



GARLIC

Field to Table: Give a brief overview of how garlic grows, when it's planted and harvested.

Hands-On: Do a sensory activity comparing the raw garlic clove to the chopped and sautéed version.

Extension: Do some garlic math (multiplication) to calculate next year's yield!

COOKING & TASTING - A CASESTUDY

Spotlight: A Selection of Local Food Literacy Resources



Re-rooted in Play Activity Guide & curriculum (Ecosource):

<http://ecosource.ca/about-us/publications/>

- **10 activity guides** – can use full lesson plans or pick and choose activities
- For **primary, junior & intermediate students** (with accommodations & extensions)
- **Sample activity: Flower Power** – includes stewardship activities and cooperative games that can be used in the schoolyard or gym. One game is to build a pollinator house; curriculum connections support **inquiry, science and technology, visual arts, math and measurement**, even **media literacy**. Games allow students to build **physical educational skills** while also learning about **pollination, seed dispersal** and other environmental concepts.



Jardins de L'Éducation (Ecosource): <http://ecosource.ca/about-us/publications/>

- **10 lesson plans** in both **French and English**. Each lesson plan includes hands-on activities, interactive games, garden learning and discussion (has a seasonal focus).
- Focus on hands-on learning, can be used both **at home** and **at school**.
- **Sample game: Farm to Table Relay Race**. Students race to different farms – one a local Ontario farm and the other farther away – while learning about where food comes from and how it gets to you. This tool can connect to a number of different curriculum requirements including **Physical Education, Literacy, French, Social Studies** across many different grade levels and needs.



Field to Table Schools Workshops (FoodShare Toronto):

<http://foodshare.net/program/student/>

- An extensive collection of educator workshops and lesson plans.
- **Cooking & Tasting Toolkit** - introduces students to ingredients, cooking techniques and tasting experiences using vegetables and fruits (local when possible).
- **Great Big Crunch Activity Guide** – invites good food enthusiasts to learn about healthy eating through the apple's journey from seed, to harvest, to market, to table (and around again)!



Classroom Connects (Ecosource): <http://ecosource.ca/about-us/publications/>

- Curriculum guide offers **15 lesson plans** (which were written and conceived by Durham District School Board (DDSB) secondary school teachers).
- Intended to open meaningful conversations with **secondary students** about our local food system, and the complexities of our food choices.
- Lesson plans are written to address the **Science, Geography, Family Studies, Hospitality and Business** curriculum expectations and contain step by step instructions for lesson preparation and delivery, and various assessment opportunities and corresponding student worksheets.

Where to Find More Hands-On, Ready to Use Teaching Resources



Sustain Ontario's Food Initiatives Greenhouse:

<http://sustainontario.com/greenhouse/>

- Houses food lesson plans and resources for teachers.
- Click on the "Food Literacy" initiative to search for hands-on teaching resources by subject, grade, and other search fields.



AgScape (formerly OAFE): <http://www.agscape.ca/>

- Offers agriculture-focused teaching guides and visits from Teacher Ambassadors (for free in-class lessons).

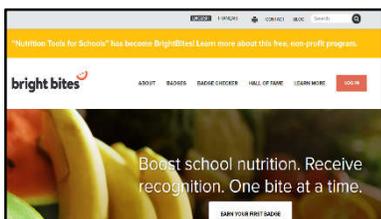
AgScape's Growing Careers website: <http://www.growingcareers.ca/>

- Has information about careers in Agribusiness:



FoodLand Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/foodland/foodland-ontario>

- Provides links, fruit and vegetable Availability Guides: <https://www.ontario.ca/foodland/page/availability-guide>
- Kids' Corner has kid-friendly info about Ontario fruits and veggies: <https://www.ontario.ca/foodland/page/kids-corner>



Brightbites (previously Nutrition Tools for Schools): <http://brightbites.ca/>

- Developed by the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH).
- Provides food and nutrition-focused lessons and a set of badges that can be achieved (though not specifically focused on local)



Edible Schoolyard Project (California): <http://edibleschoolyard.org/>

- Go to Resources to access a large database of teaching resources from around the world searchable by type, grade, subject, season.

This Local Food Literacy tipsheet has been prepared thanks to:



Possibility grows here.