Food: It's Complicated

Provided By:	The Faculty of Land and Food Systems (LFS) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in partnership with the Central Kootenay Food Policy Council (CKFPC).
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Partnership

Within the LFS faculty at UBC, LFS 350 - Land, Food, and Community II: Principles and Practice of Community Food Security, is a course that primarily focuses on addressing issues of the food system, such as sustainability and community food security. To do so, collaborative community-based experiential learning projects with organizations in the community were integrated into the course. The UBC-LFS 350 (Group 3) team worked in collaboration with Abra Brynne, the Central Kootenay Food Policy Council (CKFPC) executive director, to generate the presented educational content.

Significance and Background

The primary objective of this lesson plan is to address the issue of inadequate youth involvement in food systems issues by increasing food literacy. Additionally, we hope our content inspires a sense of urgency in youth aged 12-16 to become active food citizens. Through consultation with Abra Brynne from the Central Kootenay Food Policy Council, our community partner lead, we established that a digital educational presentation with an instructional companion guide would be most appropriate to provide support to educators. This educational presentation will efficiently communicate educational content while simultaneously allowing flexibility for educators to customize the delivery of the presentation.

As discussed by Powell and Wittman (2018), increasing food literacy skills in youth can promote engagement with food systems by encouraging positive changes in individual food habits and choices to support personal and environmental health, and participation in large-scale initiatives that target systemic changes. Food literacy programs were also suggested by Powell and Wittman (2018) to be opportunities for experiential learning and community building for youth.

Several other studies in literature also support the suggested benefits of food literacy programs and increasing food literacy among youth made by Powell and Wittman (2018). For example, nutrition promotion programs implemented in schools have been observed to have the potential to increase positive and healthy eating patterns, dietary behaviours, and overall attitudes towards food (Bailey et al., 2019). Therefore, increasing food literacy competence among youth through education may enable them to gain essential and fundamental nutrition skills, thereby promoting healthy food habits in complex food systems (Truman et al., 2017).

Furthermore, incorporating food literacy in the Canadian education system is critical as food knowledge acquired through education is extremely limited. For instance, the Canadian education curriculum employs Canada's Food Guide to educate youth on nutrition. Despite this, youth continue to have a poor understanding of food knowledge (Truman et al., 2017). Hence, there is a necessity for educational content to engage youth with food-related concepts to lay a solid foundation for lifelong development of food literacy skills.

Altogether, a proficient comprehension of food and the associated issues can encourage informed decisions regarding personal health and a sustainable food system.

Overview of Presentation

The material encompassed in the "Food: It's Complicated" presentation pertains to describing food as multi-dimensional and the various influences on food choices. We aim to increase food literacy among youth in the Central Kootenay Region while ensuring the content includes contextually appropriate material. According to the *Household Food Insecurity Indicator Report*, 20.8% of households with children are food insecure in the Interior Health region, which includes the Central Kootenay region (Li et al., 2016). Recognizing the sensitivity of topics relating to food and food choices, efforts were made to choose and express topics in a respective and inclusive manner towards those who may be impacted by food insecurity. While issues such as access to food may be difficult to discuss, we believe it is pivotal to increase awareness on the impacts of food access on food security.

There is often limited cultural diversity among local food systems. For instance, Gibb and Wittman (2013) indicated that people of colour and minority groups are underrepresented in natural food stores, farmers' markets, and other local food consumption locations. In addition, our project partner had mentioned the limited representation of cultural diversity in the Central Kootenay region (A. Brynne, personal communication, 23 September, 2020). Accordingly, we collectively agreed that implementing culture-themed material and discussing linkages to various cultures throughout the presentation would have the dual capacity to promote food literacy and an appreciation for multiculturalism. For instance, an entire segment was dedicated to cultural influences on food choices and practices. In doing so, traditional knowledge passed down through generations was celebrated and highlighted.

Food is a wonderful creation and everyone has a unique experience with it (Cassoti, 2006). Overall, the intended outcome is to encourage the audience to reflect on their unique relationship with food with an enhanced understanding and appreciation for food and the complexity of the food system. It may be difficult for students to digest now, but food choices are part of a complex, broader food system. Within this system, substantial issues remain unsolved. It is vital to devise innovative approaches to the issues, and this requires collaboration between all of us, as members of the food system.

Key Terms

- Food Literacy: food knowledge, skills and practices that increases the understanding of food among people. This knowledge enables people to navigate, engage and participate within complex food systems. Additionally, obtaining food literacy provides individuals with the ability to make decisions to support personal health and a sustainable food system, while simultaneously considering environmental, social, economic, cultural, and political components (Cullen et al., 2015).
- Food Justice: involves the collective efforts to ensure all members of the food system have fair access to food and the freedom of choice (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). Food justice primarily focuses on addressing social inequalities and the distribution of decision making powers, community self-sufficiency, land stewardship, and labour standards (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015). The three pillars of food justice are epistemic, procedural, and distributive justice (Gibb &Wittman, 2013).
- **Epistemic Food Justice:** primarily focuses on whose knowledge counts and what type of knowledge counts. This knowledge may encompass Indigenous knowledge or other cultural knowledge surrounding food (Gibb & Wittman, 2013).
- **Food Security:** when all people have constant and sufficient economic and physical access to culturally acceptable, safe and nutritious foods that also meets their food preferences and dietary requirements, in order to achieve an active and healthy life (FAO, 2006).
- Community Food Security: is achieved when everyone in a community has access to a diet that is nutritionally adequate, safe, culturally acceptable. Moreover, under these circumstances, members of the community access food through a sustainable food system that maximizes social justice, as well as self-reliance (Hamm & Bellows, 2003).
- Food Availability: the amount of food that is physically available in a geographical region for consumption (Statistics Canada, 2019).
- Food Access: is achieved when a person is able to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. This ability is affected by legal, political, economic and social arrangements of the community of residence, including traditional rights (FAO, 2006)
- **Food Utilization:** the utilization of food that encompasses appropriate food handling. food processing and storage practices, adequate sanitization and health techniques, as well as adequate knowledge of nutrition practices (World Health Organization, 2020).
- Food Stability: when access to food is constantly obtainable and not impacted by recurring or acute crises (World Health Organization, 2020).

Presentation Guide

Lesson Topic: Food: It's Complicated

Provided By: Central Kootenay Food Policy Council & Faculty of Land and Food Systems

at University of British Columbia - LFS 350 (Group 3)

*Note: The presentation may be split into multiple smaller lessons and the language of the content may be adapted by educators as they see fit to enhance accessibility for students.

Bridge	Slide 1: Food: It's Complicated Say: Let's talk about food! Right now, we are going to explore a selection of influences on our food choices and how food is complexed. The aim of this workshop is to spark fruitful conversations on food and I/we encourage you to share any thoughts you may have throughout this workshop!
Introduction	 Slide 2: Why Do You Eat? Ask: Why do you eat? Think about what you ate today - what were you thinking about when you reached for your food? Let's take a few moments to reflect on this question Slide 3: What Was Your Response? Ask: What was your answer? What are some reasons why you eat? Do: Call on a few students who have volunteered to share their thoughts Say: Everyone has different reasons for why they choose to eat! Many people will eat to satisfy hunger or for pleasure because food is delicious or even to spend time with family and friends
Table of Contents	 Slide 4: Table of Contents Say: So, keeping this in mind, we are going to explore 3 main influences on our food choices: Cultural Influences Media Influences Accessibility Following this, we will dive into the different meanings of food.
Cultural Influences	 Slide 5: Cultural Influences Say: Food is an important element of cultural heritage. Specifically, traditional foods can be a hallmark feature of cultures. Thus, your cultural background can impact and define your food choices.

Slide 6: Traditional food knowledge is passed down through generations

Say: For example, traditional food knowledge is passed down through generations. Encompassed within our family history, this knowledge can be a major influence on our food choices.

Ask: Do you have any family recipes or food traditions?

Do: Call on a few students who have volunteered to share their thoughts

Say: Many people connect food with their cultural background. For example, did you know that poutine is a food that is connected to Canadian culture? Poutine was created in Quebec! Cultural foods help people celebrate their cultural identity!

Ask: What is a cultural food from your background?

Do: Call on a few students who have volunteered to share their thoughts

Slide 7: Cultural Influences Among 3 Different Cultures

Say: We will be focussing on three specific cultures today.

- The first culture we will learn about is <u>Chinese culture</u>: Chinese-Canadians make up around 5% of the Canadian population. In Chinese culture, food is traditionally used to help treat and prevent illness.
- An Indigenous culture will be the second focus. In particular, we will be studying the <u>Gitxaala ("git-gath-la"; previously known as Kitkatla) Nation</u>, an Indigenous nation in British Columbia's North Coast. The society is one of the oldest inhabitants of the coast.
- The third culture we will be exploring is <u>Mexican Culture</u>. Canada and Mexico share rich cultural and economic ties. For example, Day of the Dead is a Mexican national holiday that follows Halloween. The holiday is observed in Mexico to honour deceased loved ones and celebrations are also observed in Canada. Mexico is also Canada's second highest source for fruit imports, including avocados and bananas.

Slide 8: Chinese Culture

Say: Eating foods in Chinese culture is primarily centered on achieving balance through the four properties:

- Hot
- Warm
- Cool
- Cold

Maintaining this balance helps prevent and eliminate illness/disease, slow aging and maintain health

It is traditionally believed that warm and hot foods can be used to treat colds. Warm and hot foods can also be eaten to maintain stomach and kidney health. Examples of hot and warm foods are chips and black tea.

In contrast, cold and cool foods are traditionally eaten to detoxify, prevent dry skin, or treat fevers. Examples of cold and cool foods are pears and aloe vera. As a result, consuming a diet that ensures balance among the four properties is common in Chinese culture.

Ask: This is a common theme in many cultures! For example, Vietnamese diets are primarily centred on achieving this balance, as well.

Optional: Ask if any students have something similar in their culture. **Do:** Call on one or two students that have volunteered to share their thoughts

Slide 9: Gitxaala Nation

Say: Harvesting, preparing, and communal sharing of natural resources is central to food consumption and overall Gitxaalan identity. Food is a channel through which intergenerational stories and traditions are communicated. Relationships are also shaped and maintained through food.

Sustainability is a core value held, with an emphasis on avoiding excessive exploitation of resources. With an understanding of the natural life and migratory patterns, the Gitxaala live in harmony with the territory and its ecosystems. Land stewardship, or ensuring the conservation of the land and resources, is practiced through minimally disruptive harvests and activities. For example, when fishing for seafood, the Gitxaala are responsive to the status of fish populations to avoid overfishing, and utilize practices that prevent or release unintentional catches. In essence, sustainable practices can be described as taking nothing more than what is needed.

Upon the arrival of European settlers and colonization, access and availability of traditional foods and resources was disrupted, along with overall customary ways of life.

Current concerns relate to the introduction of tankers (such as for oil) in the area, which can further disrupt traditional harvest practices and ecological health.

- prohibition and loss of traditional fishing sites in the past regarded by the Gitxaala to be an infringement of their "Aboriginal rights"
- similarly, loss of access to harvest sites in the waters due to oil tankers can impair the Gitxaala people from practices they engaged in pre-settler contact, which is an Aboriginal right

Optional: Ask if any students are familiar with the Indigenous communities and the history of the Central Kootenay region.

	Slide 10: Mexican Culture Say: Maize (also known as corn) is fundamentally embedded in Mexican culture. Maize is considered the most important crop in Mexico and its significance is reflected in the wide variety of foods that make use of it. For example, corn tortillas made with corn flour are a staple in Mexican culture and contribute to a significant portion of the average energy and protein intake. Freshly harvested maize can be eaten boiled or fresh, or dried and ground after a few months from harvest. Even the cobs can be used as kindling for fires and the husks to make tamales. Maize is also used to make an "energy drink" tejate, which contains roasted and fermented maize, mixed with cacao beans, seeds, and flowers. Corn and corn products continue to be staples in the Mexican diet despite globalization and trade deals that have threatened traditional diets and maize farming. Specifically, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement, 1994; renegotiated as CUSMA (Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement), 2020) has threatened domestic corn production due to competitive imports from the US.
	Optional activity (individual or group): Challenge the students to explore the rich agricultural landscape of the local region
	Optional activity (individual or group): Challenge the students to choose a food product and map out its journey from production/place of origin to consumption
	Slide 11: Moving Outwards
Transition	Say: Personal food choices are intimately connected to your cultural background. In the next segment, we will explore how food choices are influenced by the media!
	Slide 12: We are Surrounded by Media
	Say: Today more than ever we rely on the media for our news, information, advice, entertainment and inspiration. Media has a heavy impact on many aspects of our lives including our food choices and eating habits.
Media Influences	 Slide 13: Media Influences Say: We will be looking 2 major influence of media: 1. Food advertising and marketing, which specifically focuses on highly packaged and processed foods 2. Creating body 'ideals' and beauty standards that impacts all genders
	 Slide 14: Food Marketing & Advertising Say: Food marketing may involve the delivery of nutritional information about certain foods, which can contribute to our food knowledge. An example of a promotional message is yogurt being a good source of

- calcium and probiotics that supports our gut health. While nutritional messages can bring benefits to consumers, there are also other motives of food marketing.
- The main goal of marketing is to increase the sale of a product by making it look more attractive to the public. To do so, the companies will try to foster brand building in younger children and adolescents as they are at an impressionable age. By building brand loyalty from a young age, companies are able to secure customers for the future.
- Adverts are specifically designed to create a brand image and target their intended consumers.
- Food marketing can take on many forms, such as: advertisements on television, social media posts, celebrity endorsements, sponsorship of events, product placements in movies and contests and sales promotions. Newer forms of marketing like sponsored social media posts are harder to recognize, making it harder to know when you are being advertised to.

Slide 15: Food Advertising & Obesity

Say:

- Exposure to food advertising, especially commercials for fast or convenience foods, and soft drinks, may influence the viewer's food choices. Particularly, this increases the consumption of higher-fat or higher-energy foods. Foods that are marketed tend to be high in sugar, fat and calories.
- Unhealthy food and beverage advertising is a probable cause of childhood overweight and obesity.
- Television is the favorite advertising medium used by the food industry. For example, fast-food restaurants spend more than 95% of their advertising budgets on television advertisements.
- Specifically, television viewing has been linked to increased childhood obesity.

Slide 16: Have You Been Impacted?

Say: Canadian children are more exposed to television advertisements for unhealthy foods and beverages than in other countries, with exposures being as high as 6 times per hour. These statistics show the extent of the impact of the media on Canadian children.

Slide 17: Creation of Unrealistic and Toxic Body Ideals **Say:**

- While food advertising is an obvious form of influencing eating habits, the media has a more personal and indirect way of doing the same. This is through the creation of unrealistic and toxic body ideals.
- Due to the common use of Photoshop and other tools to edit pictures or visuals, and the underrepresentation of diverse body types, the media creates "beauty ideals" which indirectly pressures people, especially adolescents, to look a certain way to be accepted and admired by society.
- Constantly comparing yourself to the celebrities, models, influencers and even your friends on social media leads to lower self-esteem and

- body dissatisfaction. While media can be used for inspiration and motivation, it more likely has negative impacts on your mental health.
- Your relationship with your body impacts your relationship with food.
 A negative relationship can lead to unhealthy food habits and a changed outlook on foods and beverages. For example, partaking in diets that may involve restrictions and other harmful practices can lead to serious health consequences. The practice of labelling foods as good or bad can also result.

Slide 18: Creation of Unrealistic and Toxic Body Ideals

- Due to the changing trends in preferred body shapes, there has been a direct change in our food choices. Perceptions surrounding beauty and body types not only vary by culture, but have evolved significantly throughout history.
- Media advertising is an internalising or normalising means to spread unrealistic beauty ideals. For instance, the ideal for women's body size and shape has become considerably thinner and leaner and men's body size and shape have become stronger and more muscular over time.
- Transgender and gender non-conforming people are at higher risks for disordered eating behaviours in their attempt to attain more masculine or feminine statures and conform to 'beauty ideals'.
- The pressure to fit into these body ideals and standards explains why adolescents who encounter media on a daily basis are preoccupied with their bodies and dissatisfied with their body image. There is a high chance that this dissatisfaction leads to food restriction, guilt around food, dangerous dieting and more.

Slide 19: Media Literacy Among Youth

Say:

- It is hard to escape the onslaught of messages about our bodies. To help counteract the media's potential influence on normalising unrealistic body standards, we must become media literate.
- Media literacy involves learning to think critically about different forms
 of the media, increasing awareness of media use, and analyzing the
 content and intentions of the media producers.
- What you see is not necessarily reality, and all media creations represent only certain perspectives. Remember that all forms of media are created through very deliberate, well-researched processes that are often profit-driven.
- Being aware of food marketing allows you to recognize when foods are being advertised to you. It also helps you decide whether a food item is healthy by using food labels rather than relying on marketing messages alone

Slide 20: But... Choice is a Privilege

Transition

Do: Read off the slide

Say: Culture and media are two of many influences on food choices. However, choice is a privilege. There are many people who do not have this

privilege to choose what they want to eat because they lack access to food.

Slide 21: Food Access

Do: Define and explain what food access is to students. Emphasize that the *availability* of food on market shelves does not necessarily mean the food is *accessible*. For example, the food may be too expensive, thus making the food available but not accessible.

Slide 22: Why is Food Access Important?

Say: Food access is important and influences our food choices by affecting our food security, which is being able to have sufficient, safe, nutritious foods that meet our dietary needs and food preference.

Slide 23: 4 Dimensions of Food Security

Say: There are 4 dimensions of food security:

- Availability
- Access (*will be the only one further discussed*)
- Stability
- Utilization

So, having access to food is critical to achieve food security.

Optional: briefly discuss the other 3 dimensions of food security .

Food Access

Slide 24: When Access is Hindered, Food Insecurity Increases

Say: When food access declines, food insecurity becomes an issue. Individuals who lack access to food have an increased risk of malnutrition and not having enough food to eat. This is problematic because it also creates a cycle that is difficult for them to escape. Hungry and malnourished individuals are less productive when working and are prone to diseases. Because of this, they are unable to earn more income and have trouble with purchasing and accessing food, and the cycle repeats.

Slide 25: Not Everyone Has Access to Food

Do: Read off the slide. The quote is intended to show that not every individual has access to food.

Slide 26: Food Security in Indigenous Populations

Say: Food security is an extreme public health issue for Indigenous people (such as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) in Canada. Northern communities are most vulnerable to food insecurity and 56% of the household in Nunavut are food insecure.

Slide 27: Main Factors of Food Access in Northern Indigenous Communities

Say: Access to food in many Northern Indigenous communities are affected by

• Limited shipments of food. Shipping is required since fresh vegetables and fruits cannot be grown there. The Northern region is

hard to deliver to because of the weather conditions, so food shipments only happen a few times per year. This makes food expensive to buy in the North Environmental contamination of traditional food sources that decrease the access to food Climate change, affecting ecosystems, access to hunting and fishing areas, and the availability of traditional food species Loss of traditional food practices and access to land from the assimilation of Indigenous people in the past Poverty rates are high Lastly, the cost of hunting and fishing equipment is increasing. **Slide 28:** Does Food Have Meaning? Say: While our food choices are influenced by many factors, our interpretation of food also plays a role in our eating habits. **Ask:** Do you think food has meaning? What does food mean to you? **Transition Do:** Call on one or two students that have volunteered to share their thoughts. **Sav:** There are many meanings of food! **Slide 29**: Meaning of Food Say: Food can be a variety of things to many different people here are some examples we will be exploring. Food can be love Food involves community Food can be fuel Slide 30: Food can be Love **Say:** There are many different ways that people use food to express love. In Armenia, lavash is a type of bread that is used in ceremonial events like weddings. For the Armenian people lavash is draped over both the bride and groom's shoulders and symbolizes future Meaning of prosperity and fertility for the couple (You can reference the picture Food on the slide). The process of making lavash requires the efforts of everyone a group of 5 women are each given a task when it comes to preparing the bread, while the role of men is to build the ovens and the tools used by the women to make the lavash Only a select group of women are allowed to be involved when making the lavash as it is said that the bread absorbs the feelings of those around them. Therefore it is important that the women who make it are those who are happy and bake the bread with love. **Slide 31:** Video of Lavash being made (10 min) **Optional Video**: provide a wonderful explanation and visuals as to how the bread is made Students may be encouraged to watch the video on their own time

 Link to Lavash: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NAzjPSZr4I&feature=emb_log_0

Slide 32: Food involves Community

Say: Making food can be a communal process whether it be through the act of making food or sharing a meal together.

- In Turkey Ceremonial Keşkek, a barley stew, is used in ceremonial and religious occasions such as weddings.
- The process of making Keşkek involves the entire community and is often cooked outdoors. The men and women work together to prepare the food, while some of the village youth are called upon to pound the wheat for the Keşkek in the center of the village.
- The process of making Keşkek is accompanied with much music and song. Each part of the process of making Keşkek has a specific melody or song that the crowds will dance and sing together for.
- Once the Keşkek is finished the entire village and some neighboring villages will come together to share in the feast.

Slide 33: Video of Keşkek being made (10 min)

Optional Video: provides a wonderful explanation and visuals as to how barley stew is made

- Does not provide a narrator like the Lavash video
- Students may be encouraged to watch the video on their own time
- Link to Ceremonial Keşkek: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDwhfotWAfw&feature=emb_l ogo

Slide 34: Food can be Fuel

Say: As we have previously discussed, food carries a lot of meaning to many different people. However, food also has practical meaning. We will now be looking at food's role in brain function, emotional wellbeing and physical health

- Brain function:
 - Your brain plays a very important role in the body and because of this it is important to keep your brain functioning properly.
 - Your brain needs nutrients such as vitamins (vitamin A, C etc.), carbon, amino acids and many more. All of these nutrients come from food! Therefore, it is important that you fuel your brain so that it can function properly
 - By fueling your brain you are able to better problem-solve and also recall more from memory!
- Emotional wellbeing:
 - For many people, we may all feel a bit "drained". Feeling drained may mean that you might be tired more often or maybe you find yourself getting more easily upset.
 - Food can be a great source of comfort this way and has been shown to improve a person's mental well-being

	Ask students: Think about your favourite meal/ snack to eat when you're	
	upset. Or even your favourite meal/ snack that you and your friends or family	
	like to eat!	
	Physical health:	
	 Like your brain, your body also requires nutrients to function 	
	properly. Nutrients provide the fuel needed for your body to	
	move and to grow properly.	
	 When you don't fuel your body properly it can lead to many 	
	health conditions such as osteoporosis (weakened bones) and	
	iron deficiency	
	Slide 35: Influences on Eating	
	Say: The influences on eating are all interconnected! As a reminder, we	
	covered three main key aspects of influential factors to our eating:	
	• Culture	
	Media	
	• Access	
Conclusion		
	Optional activity: Discussion with the students to think of where or when the	
	interconnections can be observed	
	Slide 36:	
	Say: Food is a wonderful and complicated creation! What influences your	
	eating?	

Student Resource List

1. Food Systems Knowledge and Involvement:

http://ckfoodpolicy.ca/;

https://centralkootenayfood.ca/;

https://youngagrarians.org/

- **2.** Food, Race and Justice: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miukaKDL-Cs&feature=youtu.be
- **3.** The Current State of Food Security and Nutrition in 2020: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64KLuGzGxEQ
- **4.** First Nations Traditional Food Knowledge: https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/Traditional Food Fact Sheets.pdf
- **5.** "Understanding Global Food Security and Nutrition" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJG7HmQyYcY
- **6.** Why Do We Need to Change Our Food System? https://www.voutube.com/watch?v=VcL3BOeteCc
- 7. How the Food You Eat Affects Your Brain Mia Nacamulli https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyOY8a-ng6g
- **8.** Canada's Food Guide with Various Language Translations https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/?wbdisable=true
- **9.** Are Children Affected by Food Marketing? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a021-mXrS-c

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