

Cooking in the Classroom

PARTNERSHIP

Queen Mary Elementary School is located in West Point Grey (Vancouver, BC) and serves 315 students.

Mission: Build a community of lifelong learners who are caring, accomplished and cooperative citizens¹

Who we worked with: Ms. Kuah and her 26 Grade 5/6 students



ISSUE

Community food security: all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice²

Food literacy: understanding the impact of one's food choices on their health, the environment and the economy³

OUR PROJECT

Objective: Increase knowledge in food literacy and cooking skills of QME students through classroom workshops

Food literacy can contribute to **community food security** by allowing students to make better food choices and increasing their awareness of cultural foods.

OUR APPROACH

Students participated in three afternoon-long sessions focused on: **nutrition, cultural foods, and food preparation.**



1) Global Food Map

Matching typical foods with appropriate cultures



2) Creating a Healthy Plate

Drawing of a balanced plate with macronutrient proportions



3) Hands-on Cooking

Preparing three recipes with fresh and healthy ingredients

Data Collection:

- **Questions** asked to students **before** and **after** the activities
- **Selected dialogue** and **behavioural observations** recorded during each session

RESULTS

We observed that the **majority** (~80%) of students were:

Before:

- Uncertain what macronutrients were
- Unfamiliar with different cultures' foods
- Not confident in their cooking skills

After:

- Able to identify macronutrients and their importance
- Able to identify origins of cultural foods
- More confident in their cooking skills

"I want to try to do the healthy blueberry muffin recipe by myself, I think my mom would like it."

- Student

"This is pretty easy now. I was so scared of cutting myself when I was cutting the sweet potato the other day."

- Student cutting an onion

NEXT STEPS

Continue conducting food literacy workshops that contribute to community food security by:

1. Introducing new topics (e.g. environmental impacts of one's food choices)
2. Implementing a hands-on activity in the QME school garden

References:

1. Vancouver School Board QME. (2019). Mission Statement. Retrieved from <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/schools/queen-mary/About-Us/Mission-Statement/Pages/default.aspx>.
2. Hamm, M., & Bellows, A. (2003). Community food security and nutrition educators. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 35(1), 37- 43. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1499-4046\(06\)60325-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1499-4046(06)60325-4).
3. Rojas, A., Valley, W., Mansfield, B., Orrego, E., Chapman, G. E., & Harlap, Y. (2011). Toward food system sustainability through school food system change: Think&EatGreen@School and the making of a community-university research alliance. *Sustainability*, 3(5), 763-788. doi:10.3390/su3050763.