

EDUB 3528: MEDIA LITERACY: A1: Practice and Pedagogy

Connecting to Curricula:

For my pedagogical tool I would like to make an activity for grade eleven biology students that they could use to learn more about nutrition in relation to our digestion and lifestyles. To connect this to media literacy, I would like to have students view different iterations of the government document Canada Food Guide. While viewing this document they would be able to learn about nutrition and digestion along with some of the core media literacy concepts (outlined in the next section). This activity will absolutely connect to the grade eleven biology curriculum in the specific learning outcomes along with the general learning outcomes outlined for scientific literacy. The general learning outcomes that this activity covers can be found below this paragraph. I believe that the specific learning outcomes B11-2-10 and B11-2-12 fit perfectly with an activity such as this. These specific learning outcomes can also be found below.

Specific Learning Outcomes:

B11-2-10: Evaluate personal food intake and related food decisions.

B11-2-12: Use the decision-making process to investigate an issue related to digestion and nutrition.

General Learning Outcomes:

A2: Recognize that scientific knowledge is based on evidence, models, and explanations, and evolves as new evidence appears and new conceptualizations develop.

C2: Demonstrate appropriate scientific inquiry skills when seeking answers to questions.

C5: Demonstrate curiosity, skepticism, creativity, open-mindedness, accuracy, precision, honesty, and persistence, and appreciate their importance as scientific and technological habits of mind.

(Government of Manitoba, 2010).

These general learning outcomes pair well with the activity of looking at the Canada Food Guide(s) and making determinations of media literacy codes found in the document. I believe this goal also fits well with the specific learning outcome, “Use the decision-making process to investigate an issue related to digestion and nutrition” (Government of Manitoba, 2010).

Theories of Media Education:

I think that literacy is something that allows people to understand and create information and opinions in different fields. This is why I believe scientific literacy, which is a major component of every science education course, is reminiscent of media literacy. Making this connection has given me a new perspective on the important of bringing media literacy to each subject area. The entire science curriculum describes the importance of being scientifically literate and using problem solving and critical thinking skills to investigate issues and develop and share information in a variety of ways. This is so connected to media literacy as students will be viewing a variety of media while investigating and then synthesizing this information and creating new media to share it! The Media Smarts website discusses this connection between the Manitoba science curriculum and media literacy stating, “Digital and media literacy expectations are included within this vision in areas relating to finding and verifying information using digital technology and considering the positive and negative impacts of digital technology.” (Media Smarts, n.d.). Media literacy is defined as, “a set of competencies that enable us to interpret media texts and institutions, to make media of our own, and to recognize and engage with the social and political influence of media in everyday life.” (Hoechsmann and Poyntz, 2012). The two portions of this definition I feel apply most to the activity I have planned are ‘make media of our own’, and ‘recognize and engage with the social and political influence of media’. I feel that both of these will be practiced as students think about the political impact of a government document recommending certain portions of food which are developed by different (and competing) industries, and then create media of their own on the same topic. One other aspect I think is worth discussing in class with students is related to racial bias. As our media we are viewing is a government document discussing food which can be a major part of culture, is there any cultural or associated racial bias displayed in this publication? “A critical teacher should design learning

experiences that help students unlearn myths” (DeLeon, 2006). I think this quote definitely applies here as addressing any biases present in the Canada Food Guide would allow students to engage in anti-racism pedagogy and look at some implicit systemic racism found in government produced media. While completing this activity students will not only view and select numerous codes of media literacy and practice decoding the Canada Food Guide as media but will also compare the current Canada Food Guide to previous editions throughout Canada’s history and compare the codes used in between them. Finally, after viewing these codes students will select from options to create their own Food Guide (either government publication such as the Canada Food Guide, or their own personal Food Guide). While creating media students will employ some codes of their own and describe why those are used.

One Page Student Handout on the next page.

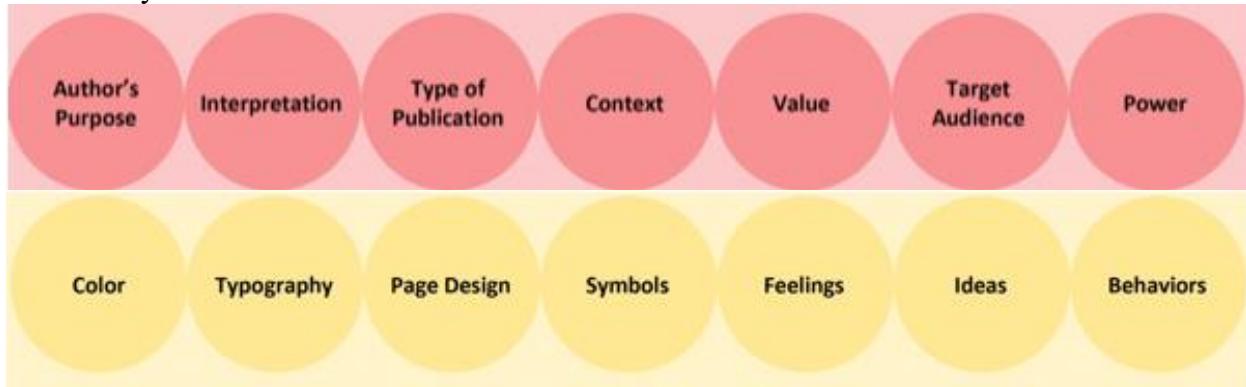
Grade 11 Biology - Viewing Canada's Food Guides:

Objectives:

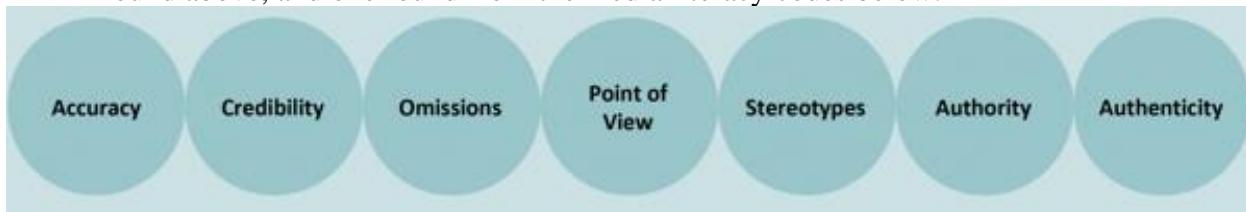
Identify use of media literacy codes	Question differences among food guides
Create your own food guide media	Be cognizant of your own use of codes

Visit <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/> to view Canada's current food guide.

1. While viewing the Canada Food Guide choose any two of the following media literacy codes found below (in pink or yellow) and describe how you think the producers of this food guide used these codes to influence the reader and/or how the reader (audience) was targeted by this publication. Write a few sentences describing these codes and how they're used in Canada's Food Guide.



2. Now I would like you to visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canada-food-guide/about/history-food-guide.html#a2007> and here view at least one other food guide from the past in Canada (there are options dating all the way back to 1942). From these I would like you to write a paragraph in which you compare and contrast one of them with the current Canada Food Guide again using at least one media literacy code found above, and one found from the media literacy codes below.



3. Lastly, I would like you to use what you've learned to create your own food guide. For this part there are multiple options you can choose from.

- a. You can create a Canada Food Guide and outline anything you would change about the current food guide and why. Be sure to relate this to the codes found above.
- b. You can make Your Food Guide of what you choose to eat and why.

You can use any media you would like to create this (i.e. poster, document, brochure, video, podcast, TikTok, etc.). Be mindful of the media literacy codes you are using in your creation.

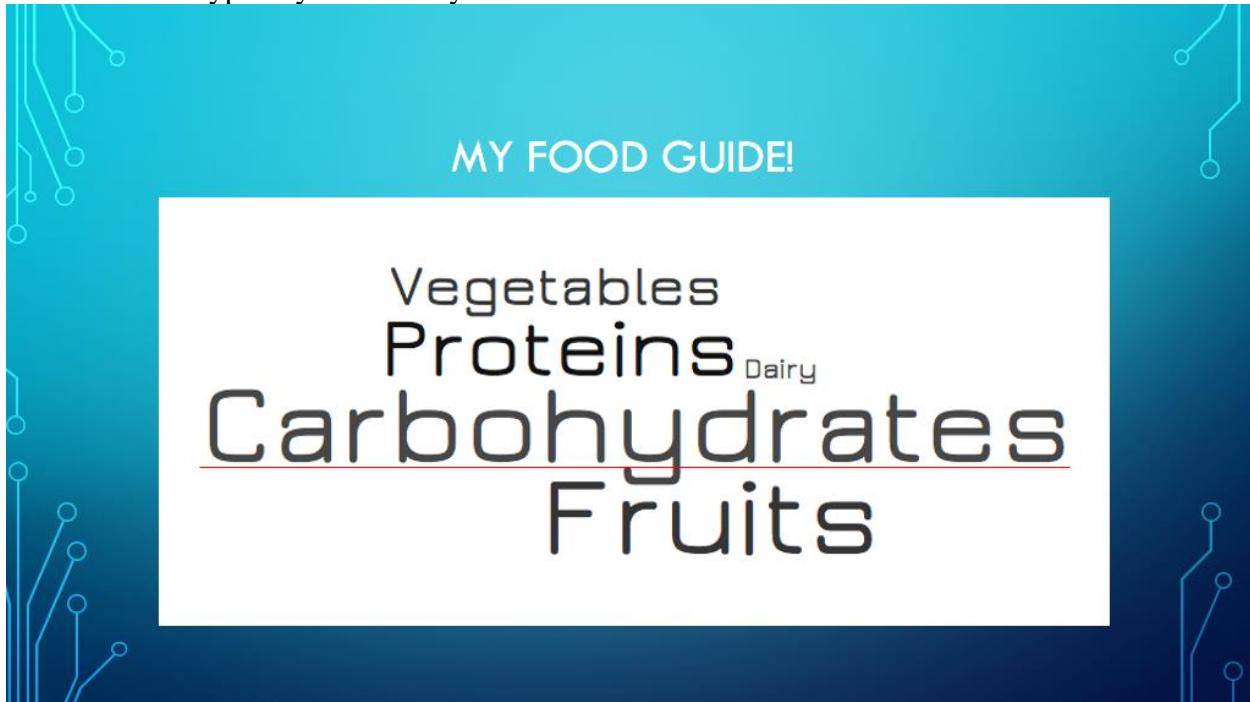
After you have created your own media on this topic, outline how at least two codes could impact your audience.

Most importantly be mindful of the media literacy codes and have fun creating!

Example of work for students:

1. I would like to discuss the media literacy codes target audience and symbols. The target audience of this document could be viewed in a number of ways. One way is that the target audience for Canada's food guide is all Canadians. In this scenario the document is labelled and titled "Canada's Food Guide", implying that it is recommended for all Canadians. Along with this I believe the fact that it is largely digitized online means that the target audience would be for Canadians who spend more time online. A way to use symbols and one final way to view the target audience is from a cultural lens. Using the foods shown as symbols, and from this lens I believe that the target audience would be mostly white or Canadians of European descent. This is because I do not see many foods from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is worth noting that this is my own opinion, and others may disagree with this.
2. For part two of this activity I would like to compare the current Canada Food Guide and the 1949 Canada's Food Rules publication media. When contrasting these two documents I would like to look at the media literacy codes of feelings and omissions. I think that 1949 Food Rules publication gives people bright colourful images of popular foods of the dominant culture in Canada. These images are cartoonish and processed food. Contrasting to the current Canada Food Guide in which the images are much more realistic images of foods. These two publications are similar in that they both show processed and ready to eat foods. This does not accurately portray the process of food reaching our table. For example, the meats are all cooked and do not show animals being butchered or raised in the environments they may be raised in. Another interesting way to contrast these two documents is looking at omissions. The 1949 Food Rules Publication displays Milk as being a dominant necessary part of Canadians diet. Along with this it describes iodized salt, and cereals and bread, as important parts of one's diet. The current Canada Food Guide does not include these items and also does not include nearly as much information about recommended portion sizes. Instead it pictures a plate with one quarter whole grains, one quarter proteins, and half fruits and vegetables. The omission of as much direct instruction as previous editions of the food guide has an impact on the viewer of this media. To me it shows recognition that each person is unique, and it is cognizant that healthy eating habits along with general eating choices is more important than following exact amounts.

3. For part three I have attached an image of a Food Guide I created which includes the foods I typically eat in a day.



I decided to use a word cloud with the sizes of the words representing the frequency that I consume those foods. By using a word cloud, I can use the codes of font size to represent frequency of foods I eat. I also used shapes and colours; the red line found underneath carbohydrates indicates that realistically I can lower the amount of carbohydrates I consume daily. I believe the font, shapes, and colours could allow my audience to make sense of my Food Guide word cloud. Along with this, the omission of specific foods within these categories is one way that using media literacy codes, I am attempting to avoid putting priority over one cultural background or another. Again, this is just in my view and I accept that others may not agree.

References:

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