

Amy
Stafford



TEACHER

CHAMPION

MARCH 2022 | AMY STAFFORD

In this issue of our BCAITC Teacher Champion series, we profile secondary school teacher, Amy Stafford. Discover her passion for educating students about BC agriculture and food.

Q: What school do you teach at? A: [GW Graham Secondary](#) in Chilliwack.

Q: What grade(s) do you teach? A: 9-12; Home Economics and Leadership courses.

Q: How and when did you first learn about BCAITC? A: I first heard about BCAITC in the early 2010's through Pat Tonn, who was previously involved in the [BC 4-H](#) program. Growing up on a working cattle ranch, completing 10 years as a 4-H member, and pursuing a degree in secondary education, Pat suggested that the position of Education Specialist role would be a great fit for me once I completed my teacher training. I was able to apply for and work in the role from September 2018 to June 2020.

Q: How long have you been teaching students about BC agriculture and food? A: I have been formally teaching for five years and have always connected my subject areas back to agriculture - whether the connections exist in obvious ways like nutrition, food production, and sustainable farming in Food Studies, or through more indirect means like early agriculture practices in Mesopotamia (Social Studies 7), and natural vs. artificial fibres comparisons (Fashion Design 10-12). Before teaching, I also volunteered with 4-H as a leader for [Food For Thought](#) and other agriculture events. I love exposing students to the connections that exist between agriculture and their day to day lives, as it is very difficult to find something that isn't at least a little bit impacted by food!

Q: What are the most important things that you want your students to learn about BC agriculture and food? A: I always start off my first Food Studies classes by sharing a bumper sticker my grandfather kept on his car for many years - it states *"If you eat, you are involved in agriculture"*. Whether or not they realize it, students play a role in the agriculture industry as consumer, and with one in eight jobs connected to agriculture, many will be involved in the industry in some way once they start their post-secondary lives. We actively discuss how food connects to our physical and mental well-being, and how the food choices we make cause larger and larger ripple effects. Many are surprised to realize exactly how diverse the BC agriculture industry is with over 60 commodities! As long as they leave my class with the tools to think critically about the food they eat and the steps that take it from farm to plate, I consider my job well done.

Q: BCAITC has over 500 free downloadable resources including lesson plans, activities, videos, recipes, and more! What is your favourite BCAITC resource and why? A: Well I am most definitely biased here, as I created quite a few! I'm proud of many of the resources on www.bcaitc.ca. Teachers can find everything they need for a fully planned, curriculum-aligned lesson! Recently, I have been impressed by the [secondary resources](#) and larger units such as the [Beef Unit Plans](#).

Q: What is your favourite BCAITC program and why? A: While working at BCAITC I had the opportunity to co-run the [Harvest Bin Project](#) - this is a fantastic way to get schools set up with their own garden as all the materials and support is provided for the first three years, It was wonderful to see how invested the teachers, students, and the community became in this project!

Q: What is an agriculture or food based project you have recently implemented in your classroom? A: Our school participates in [Spuds in Tubs](#) and [Planting a Promise](#) and we are in the process of launching a school learning garden space in fall 2022. This space would be used by the whole school, with a focus on science, food studies, community, and art connections.

Q: Do you have any advice for other educators on how to integrate agriculture and food education into their curriculum? A: BCAITC makes it incredibly easy to integrate lessons into your existing curriculum, along with the [Agriculture in the Classroom Canada website](#). These lessons have been created by teachers for teachers who understand curricular outcomes, incorporate multiple learning styles, and make agriculture and food education understandable and fun!

ABOUT THE TEACHER CHAMPION SERIES: This monthly BCAITC series features BC teachers who are passionate about providing agriculture and food education to K-12 students. For more information, please contact our Communications Coordinator, meghan@aitc.ca.