

Alexandra
Chan



TEACHER

CHAMPION

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

Q: What school do you teach at? **A:** [Ellison Elementary](#) in Kelowna.

Q: What grade(s) do you teach? **A:** Grade 4/5.

Q: How and when did you first learn about BCAITC? **A:** In February 2019, I took part in a professional development workshop run by BCAITC. I was then a participant in the BCAITC Educators Agriculture Tour that summer and loved getting to see where some of our BC produce is grown.

Q: How long have you been teaching students about BC agriculture and food? **A:** I became interested in agriculture after living and teaching in rural Japan. Living in a farming community I saw firsthand where food is grown and harvested. I was lucky to become friends with a few farmers who let me “help” out in the planting, harvesting and caring for produce like rice, grapes, bamboo shoots, and persimmons. Having grown up in downtown Toronto, I was fascinated by how much care and love went into growing food. When I returned to BC and did my teaching degree, I knew that I wanted to incorporate agriculture into my teaching practice. Starting with my practicum I created a cooking club for my elementary students.

Q: What are the most important things that you want your students to learn about BC agriculture and food? **A:** That the people who grow our food here in BC put a lot of care into their work. This summer when I was in the BCAITC [Summer Institute](#), I was able to virtually meet many BC farmers and hear about how incredibly hard they work to feed BC. I also learned that we need more farmers and there are so many career opportunities for students.

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:** This year our grade 4/5 students are big buddies to the kindergarten classes. I am really looking forward to doing some cooking lessons with them. The [applesauce recipe](#) is especially timely at this time of year because our school is in-between a few apple orchards and there are apples galore all around us!

Q: What is your favourite BCAITC program and why? **A:** I’m really excited to take part in the [Spuds in Tubs](#) program this year with my students. Our students thrive with experiential learning opportunities so I know they will love this program.

Q: What is an agriculture or food based project you have recently implemented in your classroom? **A:** Last year, my teaching partner and I worked with our students to build garden beds for the school. The students and community bought in and we had a student bring in compost from home and we received a donation of seeds from [West Coast Seeds](#). All the classes got half a box and it was exciting for them to plant their seeds, care for their sprouts and then enjoy their harvest.

Q: Do you have any advice for other educators on how to integrate agriculture and food education into their curriculum? **A:** Get outside and let your students get dirty!

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.

