Using Product Labels in the LCTL Classroom

Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Level:** Beginning-intermediate

**Aims:** Increase food-related vocabulary; foster literacy and critical thinking skills

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Assorted product labels

The following two lesson plans exemplify ways in which recipes can be used promote general literacy and critical thinking skills while enhancing students’ knowledge of food and nutrition-related vocabulary.

- Can you eat this?—Using product labels to hunt out allergic ingredients
- Does everything have salt in it?—Thinking about ingredients
Can you eat this?—Using product labels to hunt out allergic ingredients

**Level:** Beginning-intermediate

**Aims:** Practice literacy and problem solving

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** multiple product labels, worksheet

Food allergies are a fact of life. For people with these allergies, it is critical to know the ingredients in their food. This lesson, aimed at beginning to intermediate students, sends students on a product label hunt to find food that are safe and acceptable for people with allergies.

**Procedure:**
1. Before class, do the following:
   a. Locate five or six food product labels from different sorts of products. These labels must include the ingredients of the item.
   b. Mount the labels (or a photocopy thereof) on something sturdy (e.g., construction paper or cardboard) and place them on the walls around the room.
   c. Prepare a worksheet to guide students through the activities (see appendix)
2. In class, present a sample food product label with the graphic first. Have students guess what the product is. If students know any food words, ask students to guess the ingredients in the product. Otherwise, present the ingredient portion of the label. Highlight the primary (non-chemical) ingredients and review their pronunciation with the students.
3. Pass out the worksheet to pairs of students and have students move about the room to fill it out.
4. When students have competed the worksheet, wrap up by asking them to share their conclusions.

**Caveats and Options:**
1. Beginning students will not know what the ingredients are but can practice literacy by skimming for information.
2. For more advanced students who already know the meanings of the ingredients, this can be transformed into a gap activity where some students are given allergies and other students are given ingredients. Student move around the room to find out what allergic students can eat.
Appendix

The following people have allergies and cannot eat certain foods. Put a check mark under the foods that the person can eat, meaning the food does not contain what they are allergic to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Peanut M&amp;M</th>
<th>Bread</th>
<th>Sausage</th>
<th>Cheese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John (peanuts)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susy (milk)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark (eggs)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice (wheat)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Does everything have salt in it?—Thinking about ingredients

Level: Intermediate—advanced

Aims: Practice generalization, learn food words

Class time: 30 minutes

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Resources: One product label, blackboard, overhead, worksheet

Because of growing government regulations, more and more food products today list the ingredients on the product label. This, in turn, helps inform the food-consuming public of the nutritional value of the product’s contents and helps to alert consumers to ingredients that may harm their health in the long run. This lesson involves a fun brainstorming activity that stretches students’ knowledge of food ingredients, increases their food-related vocabulary, and raises their consciousness as consumers.

Procedure:
1. Before class, do the following:
   a. Locate a product label for a food product that is comprised of one primary ingredient. (e.g., tomato sauce, peanut butter, bread, etc.).
   b. Prepare an overhead or poster of the ingredients.
   c. Prepare a worksheet (see appendix) for group work.
2. Present the product label. Discuss the product with the students, asking questions such as...
   a. What is it?
   b. What is their opinion of it? Do they like it or not?
   c. What is the primary ingredient in it?
   d. What other ingredients might it have
3. Note student contributions to the above discussion on the board.
4. Present the overhead or poster of the ingredients for comparison
5. Ask students to name other products that contain the primary ingredient.
   a. Note contributions on the board
6. Pair students and pass out the worksheet (see appendix).

Caveats and Options:
1. As a follow up activity, ask students to write a paragraph or two about their favorite food and which ingredients makes it their favorite
2. For a competitive class, group students and have students brainstorm in their groups some other products that contain the primary ingredients.

Acknowledgements
The lesson plan was inspired by Victoria Holder.
Choose 3 products we named with flour in it. Answer the following questions.

1. List the three products you have chosen:
   a. _______________
   b. _______________
   c. _______________

2. Name two other ingredients that all three have in common:
   a. Salt ____________
   b. _______________

3. Name three other ingredients that are unique to each product:
   a. Product 1:
   b. Product 2:
   c. Product 3:

4. Which product would you be willing to eat every day?