

Food and nutrition resources employed in Victorian primary schools: are resources evidence-based, accessible, and relevant to the Australian context?

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The primary school environment is a key setting where children can learn about food and nutrition and improve dietary habits.⁽¹⁾ However, food and nutrition (F&N) education forms only a small proportion of content (< 3%) across the eight learning areas of the Victorian primary school curriculum.^(1,2,3) In Victoria, Australia, education resources are available to teachers via the Finding, Using and Sharing Educational resources (FUSE) website, promoted by Victoria Department of Education (DET).^(3,4) Despite resources being available on the FUSE website, teachers frequently cite a lack of resources as a barrier to teaching F&N.⁽²⁾ This study aimed to collate FUSE resources containing F&N content (evidence-base, relevance, accessibility) to inform the provision of resources to better meet teacher needs. Resources were extracted and categorised using the CRAAP Model regarding currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose.⁽⁵⁾ Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Sixty-eight education resources were identified across the eight learning areas of the curriculum ($n = 5$ Health and Physical Education (HPE); $n = 10$ Design and Technologies; $n = 10$ Science; $n = 9$ Maths; $n = 1$ Humanities [History]; $n = 0$ Arts; $n = 27$ HPE and Design and Technologies; $n = 4$ HPE, Maths, Science and English; $n = 2$ Design and Technologies, Geography Science). Preliminary data analysis showed the majority of resources ($n = 59$; 87%) to be evidence-based and aligned with the ADGs. All resources were considered relevant to the Australian context, based on similar dietary guidelines developed for high-income countries, namely Australia, USA and UK. Only half of resources ($n = 34$, 50%) were easily accessible with direct access to the linked resource, and of these, many were not in a teachable format. More than a third ($n = 27$, 40%) of resources were used multiple times across year levels and learning areas. Preliminary results indicate that evidence-based resources regarding food and nutrition are available to Victorian primary school teachers, relevant to the Australian context. These, however, form a small proportion of available FUSE education resources, are predominantly for three of the eight learning areas (HPE, Design and Technologies, Science), and require additional adaptation for classroom teaching. Opportunity exists to explore the development of F&N resources that can be delivered in an integrated manner across learning areas with scaffolded content appropriate to each year level. Further research is also needed to explore the uptake and usage of FUSE education resources by Victorian primary school teachers to inform the co-design of useful F&N education resources.

References

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