

TOOLS FOR INSTRUCTORS



The California Health Education Content Standards provide the nutrition content and skills necessary to build positive student nutrition behaviors. Because seven of the eight health content standards target essential skills, skill-based instruction is an important tool for developing students' skills, such as communication, assessing accuracy of information, goal setting, decision making, and health promotion (California Department of Education 2008). These skills enable students to develop personal confidence and to handle social pressures and avoid or reduce unhealthy nutrition behaviors. For each grade level and skill, skill-based instruction guides students through a series of developmental steps.

When preparing for skill-based nutrition instruction, carefully select appropriate nutrition content and context, apply and reinforce the steps for skill-based instruction, and include a variety of teaching methods.

Select appropriate nutrition content and context

1. Focus on the concepts and skills in California's health education content standards. Students don't need to learn it all at once. Use the standards to guide knowledge and skill development.
2. Include situations and activities that are current, relevant, and applicable to students' daily lives. Talk to students and parents, and get to know the nutrition products, situations, and decisions they face each day. Build these into your skill-based lessons and activities to help personalize information.
3. Choose age-appropriate situations and activities for skill development. For example, elementary students may learn to access valid information from health care staff, parents, and teachers; whereas middle or high school students may learn and practice evaluating and accessing information from Internet sites.
4. Include information, examples, and activities that are inclusive of diverse cultures and lifestyles, such as gender, ethnicity, religion, ability, and appearance.
5. Refer to the California-adopted health education texts for additional lessons with grade-appropriate, skill-based instruction.

Apply the steps for skill-based instruction and support ongoing opportunities to incorporate skills into everyday life

1. Include the five steps of skill-based instruction to effectively build students' health and nutrition skills. (See the "Steps for Skill-based Instruction" chart on the next page.)
2. Plan adequate time to promote students' understanding of essential concepts and to practice skills. The five steps for skill-based instruction are built into some of the lessons; however, extension activities and additional class time are needed to support effective student skill development. Introducing a skill once, or providing a few hours at one grade level, is not enough to support adoption of or maintenance of healthy nutrition behaviors.
3. Continue to model skills and use the steps of goal-setting and decision-making when making class and group decisions and goals. Decide as a class about fruits and vegetables to investigate or taste. Work toward class fruit and vegetable tasting goals.
4. Reinforce skills by praising students you see reading labels and practicing healthier behaviors (e.g. bringing healthier lunches or trying new foods at school lunch or breakfast).
5. Introduce nutrition case studies and role-playing to check understanding and provide examples of how to apply skills in new contexts.

Steps for Skill-Based Instruction

(Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards 2007)

1. Establish Importance and Present the Steps

- Examine the importance of the skill.
- Explore the relevance of the skill and its relationship to other skills.
- Outline the steps for developing and practicing the skill.

2. Model the Skill

- Provide opportunities for students to observe the skill being applied effectively.
- Build understanding by providing opportunities for students to ask questions during and after skill modeling.

3. Guided Practice

- Furnish step-by-step practice for students to learn and apply the skill.
- Give step-by-step coaching and feedback from peers or the teacher.
- Provide multiple opportunities for small-group and whole-group check-ins to answer emerging questions and offer solutions.

4. Independent Practice

- Provide opportunities for students to practice and apply the complete skill sequence.
- Provide opportunities for self-reflection, and peer and teacher coaching.
- Provide multiple opportunities for small-group and whole-group check-ins to answer emerging questions and offer solutions.

5. Apply to Real-Life Scenarios

- Provide opportunities for students to practice applying the skill set to a variety of real-life scenarios.
- Provide reflection opportunities for students to share and explore the pros and cons of different ways to address the scenarios with the skill set.
- Encourage students to try new and different skills and strategies to deal with the scenarios.
- Provide multiple opportunities for small-group and whole-group check-ins to answer emerging questions and offer solutions.

Include a variety of teaching methods

1. When modeling a skill or providing guided or independent practice, include a variety of teaching methods.
2. Emphasize participatory methods that promote cooperation rather than competition and encourage student engagement by employing the following teaching strategies at any of the steps of skill-based instruction.

TEACHING METHOD	SKILL-BASED INSTRUCTION EXAMPLES
Class discussion and questioning	The teacher or a student poses questions and leads discussions to analyze, clarify, or reach conclusions about the skills learned. For example, the Warm-up, Cool down, and Check for Learning sections of the lessons include different types of questions (e.g. comprehension questions, evaluation questions, and application questions) to check for student understanding of the skill and to guide discussion about how the skill can be applied to real-life situations.

TEACHING METHOD	SKILL-BASED INSTRUCTION EXAMPLES
Cooperative or small group activities	The students are members of a problem-solving group in which they collaborate, delegate and share responsibilities, practice communication skills, and support others. For example, students work in small groups in the <i>How Much Sugar</i> activity (Lesson 1B) or <i>Healthy Celebrations</i> lesson (Lesson 3C).
Demonstrations	The teacher or a student demonstrates the steps of a skill. For example, the teacher models the steps to goal setting (Lesson 3B) or reads a Nutrition Facts label (Lesson 1B).
Peer teaching	The students share information and skills with one another and learn in ways that involve sharing knowledge, ideas, and experience. For example, students work in teams in the <i>Learning the Facts Bingo</i> activity (Lesson 1A).
Self-Assessment	The students assess their understanding of content or their ability to perform a skill. For example, the Home Connection section encourages students to practice the skill outside the classroom with family members or friends.
Writing assignments	The teacher includes writing activities to help students reflect on skills learned and how they can be applied to daily practices. For example, the Links/Extensions section (in Lesson 2B) encourages students to interview a family member or friend who has achieved a goal and write a comparison paper on the goal-setting process of the family member/friend with the steps learned in class.



1. Adapted from the California Department of Public Health, *Network for a Healthy California* resource: *Linking Science and Nutrition: Tips, Lessons, and Resources for Integrated Instruction* (2010). Developed in collaboration with the California Healthy Kids Resource Center.

Skill-Based Health Education Content Standards

The focus in the health education standards is on teaching the skills that enable kindergarten through grade twelve students to make healthy choices and avoid high-risk behaviors. Seven of the eight health standards target essential skills for healthy living; one standard targets the essential knowledge (concepts) for healthy living.

Overarching Health Content Standards

STANDARDS	DESCRIPTION
Essential health concepts	All students will comprehend essential concepts related to enhancing health. Understanding essential concepts about the relationships between behavior and health provides the foundation for making informed decisions about health-related behaviors, and for selecting appropriate health products and services.
Analyzing health influences	All students will demonstrate the ability to analyze internal and external influences that affect health. Health choices are affected by a variety of influences. The ability to recognize, analyze, and evaluate internal and external influences is essential to protecting and enhancing health.
Accessing valid health information	All students will demonstrate the ability to access and analyze health information, products, and services. Students are exposed to numerous sources of information, products, and services. The ability to access and analyze health information, products, and services provides a foundation for practicing health-enhancing behaviors.
Interpersonal communication	All students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health. Positive relationships support the development of healthy attitudes and behaviors. The ability to appropriately convey and receive information, beliefs, and emotions is a skill that enables students to manage risk, conflict, and differences, and to promote health.

STANDARDS	DESCRIPTION
Decision-making	All students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health. Managing health behaviors requires critical thinking and problem solving. The ability to use decision-making skills to guide health behaviors fosters a sense of control, and promotes the acceptance of personal responsibility.
Goal setting	All students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health. The desire to pursue health is an essential component to building healthy habits. The ability to use goal-setting skills enables students to translate health knowledge into personally meaningful health behaviors.
Practicing health-enhancing behaviors	All students will demonstrate the ability to practice behaviors that reduce risk and promote health. Practicing healthy behaviors builds competence and confidence to use learned skills in real-life situations. The ability to adopt health-enhancing behaviors demonstrates students' ability to use knowledge and skills to manage health, and reduce risk-taking behaviors.
Health promotion	All students will demonstrate the ability to promote and support personal, family, and community health. Personal, family, and community health are interdependent and mutually supporting. The ability to promote the health of oneself and others reflects a well-rounded development and expression of health.

Adapted from the *Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, adopted by the State Board of Education, March 2008. The full standards can be downloaded from the California Department of Education (CDE) website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov> or purchased from CDE Press, (916) 445-1260.

Assessment strategies can be employed before the lesson to determine students' existing knowledge, during the lesson to check for understanding and quickly address needs, and after the lesson to document students' achievement of the learning objectives.

Before the lesson — activate prior knowledge

1. Assess prior knowledge during the pre-activity classroom discussions on the topic.
 - Ask students to share their experiences or what they know about the topic.
 - Use a variety of strategies to assess prior knowledge (e.g. quick write, sharing in pairs, interviewing classmates, graphic organizers, or group round-robin discussions).
 - Ask follow-up questions, such as where and when they learned about the lesson content, what was interesting to them, what they want to know more about.

During the lesson — check for understanding

1. Start the activity and conduct a class-wide “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” survey to assess how the first few steps have gone, and to check that the teams are all on track.
2. Circulate from team to team during the activity to check if students understand the concepts and skills practice, and to help where needed.
3. Make a mental note of any individual students who may be struggling and might warrant a follow-up or supplementary support.
4. Make announcements to the whole class if something you learned by checking in with one group is likely to be useful to all groups.

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After the lesson — document achievement of the learning objectives

1. Ask questions to assess how each team completed the activity.
2. Ask a reporter from each team to share their results and describe what the results mean. Vary what each team is asked to report, and questions they respond to, so all teams have something to contribute.
3. Use a variety of assessment techniques, including paper-pencil tests, essays, projects, reports, and presentations. Additional examples:
 - Self-assessment: Students describe and compare the nutrition concepts and skills they knew before the lesson to what they learned in the lesson. They complete a quick write-up about healthy actions they can take to apply what they've learned.
 - Group assessment: Students evaluate the performance of each team member and assess how the team worked together. They also identify nutrition concepts and skills that they can explain to the class and describe areas that they would like to learn more about.
 - Whole class assessment: The class evaluates the comprehension level of the group using brief comment cards.
 - Culminating project: Student groups plan and execute a nutrition or activity campaign or community event to share what they have learned. They may use a play, PowerPoint, video presentation, poster, or other multi-media resource.
4. Ask students to write a reflective paragraph on the strengths and weaknesses of the activity, how the team worked together, and what was learned from the activity.
5. Assign extension activities and homework projects that enable students to practice nutrition skills, re-do any portions of the activity needing additional work, and to demonstrate their understanding. Extension ideas are included with the lessons.
6. Ask students to write assessment questions for a paper-pencil test.
7. Have students create nutrition portfolios. Students select and compile nutrition-related reports, writing, and assessment projects. As students review and select examples to add to their portfolios, ask them to describe their selections and reasons for choosing them.
8. After the end of the lesson, and periodically throughout the school year, refer to the activities and ask the class questions (e.g., how does a previous activity relate to a new topic?).



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