Powerful Health Education Instructional Practices

Teacher Behaviors	Student Behaviors	Artifacts

1. **Students examine their own perspectives, beliefs and values and engage in learning activities that strengthen health-enhancing attitudes. (*Understanding Health-Related Practices*)**

The teacher:

- Creates and nurtures a respectful, caring and inclusive environment that fosters a culture of learning in collaboration with students
- Uses state, regional, school and community resources to strengthen protective factors and address risk behaviors
- Designs lessons in which students create, examine and analyze their personal attitudes, values and beliefs about healthy behaviors and identify and understand the factors that influence their behaviors and perspectives
- Designs instruction that builds on previously learned concepts and skills
- Shares a diverse range of beliefs and personal perspectives on healthy behaviors

The students:

- Contribute to a respectful, caring and inclusive learning environment through verbal and nonverbal interactions with peers and the teacher
- Share and reflect on their perspectives, interact with others, take risks to enhance their learning and ask questions
- Self-assess and reflect on their health behaviors and personal perspectives and the origin of those behaviors and perspectives
- Analyze and understand their personal attitudes, values and beliefs about healthy behaviors

Classroom artifacts:

- Include observations and student products that demonstrate students' understanding
- Show evidence that students self-assess and reflect on their healthy behaviors and personal perspectives and the factors that contribute to those behaviors and perspectives

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2. Relevant, authentic learning experiences and assignments lead students to practice and use health literacy skills. (*Adopting and Maintaining Health-Promoting Behaviors*)

The teacher:

- Uses Youth Risk Behavior Survey[1] results, school data, interest inventories and other data sources to inform curricular decision-making and planning based on student and community needs
- Develops activities that alter behaviors to reinforce healthy practices
- Develops multiple learning experiences that address healthy behavior outcomes within the priority risk topics
- Creates lessons and assignments that include functional information and help students develop health literacy skills that contribute to healthy behaviors
- Creates performance assessments, skills-based units, and/or project-based units that allow students to apply concepts and skills in home or community settings

The students:

- Access local, regional and state data related to protective factors, risk behaviors and health-enhancing behaviors as appropriate
- Articulate how the various dimensions of health interrelate and influence each other
- Complete assignments that assess their knowledge of various health issues
- Define and explain what it means and why it is important to be a health literate person
- Demonstrate the health-promoting behaviors needed to maintain and enhance their health and wellness
- Implement changes to practices or behaviors within the school or home setting
- Complete authentic performance assessments and/or project-based assignments that demonstrate their understanding of health concepts and skills

Classroom artifacts:

- Include local, regional, state and national data from various valid and reliable sources
- Show evidence of a planned, sequential scope and sequence that outlines learning outcomes for health skills and knowledge
- Include student products from performance assessments, skills-based units and/or project-based units
- Spotlight the diverse dimensions of health and health-related issues through oral artifacts (e.g., debates, interviews, raps, speeches, skits, podcasts), written artifacts (e.g., articles, blogs, essays, wellness plans, menus, poems, scripts, surveys) and visual artifacts (e.g., scrapbooks, ads, graphs, stickers, cartoons, maps, videos)

3. Lesson sequences within a unit are based upon the meaningful skill development model and address concept and skill development and mastery. (*Supporting Health Skill Development*)

The teacher:

- Designs lessons that align with standards and build health skills and functional knowledge
- Plans a series of lessons that support meaningful skill development[2] and cultivate students' knowledge, skills and ability to complete performance tasks
- Explains why skills are important and relevant, shares steps to develop skills, models and practices skills using authentic scenarios that avoid biases, and provides feedback
- Checks for understanding and adjusts instruction to include reteaching and/or differentiation of instruction

The students:

- Explain the relevance and importance of health literacy skills that align with standards
- Demonstrate health knowledge and skills
- Actively engage with lessons that allow them to discuss the importance and relevance of skills, understand how to develop skills, model and practice skills in the context of real-life scenarios, and modify their actions based on feedback
- Work individually and collaboratively to apply their knowledge and skills to demonstrate and promote healthy practices

Instructional plans:

- Include performance assessment prompts that assess student knowledge and skills
- Sequence lessons strategically to support skill development, following a skill development model
- Outline how students will develop health literacy skills throughout the unit
- Create opportunities for students to practice using skills daily
- Include opportunities for students to complete products that reflect cross-content connections, as appropriate

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4. Focused learning targets and quality feedback advance students' understanding of health concepts and development of health-enhancing skills. (*Aligning Learning Targets to Unit Expectations*)

The teacher:

- Communicates expectations for assessments and articulates grading scales
- Posts, explains and refers to the lesson's learning targets, highlighting expectations
- Monitors learning and proficiency by strategically planning learning targets that align with formative assessments
- Designs performance assessments[3] and summative assessments that support health literacy and provides structured feedback
- Uses frequent checks for understanding to monitor skill development and content knowledge acquisition and adjust instruction
- Allows students to assess their own and each other's learning and provide feedback
- Monitors progress through formative and summative assessments, provides feedback and uses a standards-based rubric to score culminating assignments and extended written products

The students:

- Summarize learning targets and provide examples
- Explain how learning targets relate to the assignment and are relevant to their lives
- Engage in formative assessments to determine their progress on learning targets
- Self-assess their work using standards-aligned criteria and plan next steps
- Revise their work based on self-assessments and feedback from peers and the teacher

Classroom artifacts:

- Include learning targets that are posted, referenced and connected with short-term and long-term unit goals
- Include products or performance assessments that align with the health skill development outcomes of the unit
- Include examples of descriptive student and/or teacher feedback in completed formative assessments
- Spotlight examples of revisions made based on student and/or teacher feedback
- Include student reflection logs and reactions to feedback throughout an instructional unit or the course as a whole

5. Engaging learning strategies promote the progressive development of skills and address learning expectations. (*Designing Engaging Instruction*)

The teacher:

- Selects learning strategies that progressively support the development of health literacy
- Communicates the purpose and relevance of learning strategies to learning targets and tasks
- Introduces, names and models the use of learning strategies
- Uses technology strategically to help students understand, practice and retain health content
- Empowers students to investigate, explain and reflect on health and wellness

The students:

- Use varied learning strategies to practice their health knowledge and skills
- Work collaboratively and independently to practice their health knowledge and skills
- Select learning strategies or tools based on their unique learning styles or habits

Classroom artifacts:

- Show evidence of strategies that help students progressively develop their ability to analyze influences, access valid and reliable resources, communicate effectively, make healthy decisions, set goals, self-manage and advocate for themselves and others
- Show evidence of strategies that transfer to other assignments and content areas

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6. Students meaningfully engage in participatory learning to apply health content knowledge and skills within the context of self, family and the community. (*Connecting Health Practices Beyond the Classroom*)

The teacher:

- Creates relevant, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate assignments that support students' social, emotional, mental, physical and academic needs
- Encourages students to engage in social and interactive learning experiences that empower students to share their thoughts and opinions, think critically and engage in creative expression
- Promotes self-reflection and helps students personalize lessons
- Uses state standards to identify opportunities for interdisciplinary instruction
- Asks students to identify connections between their health class and learning in other classes to connect learning
- Ensures that assessments are free of bias and stereotypes, culturally responsive and sustaining, and trauma-sensitive[4]
- Facilitates discussions and encourages students to examine ideas from different perspectives

The students:

- Ask questions of others, such as their peers, family members, school staff and community members, and actively listen to deepen their understanding of multiple perspectives and content
- Examine different sides of an issue, when applicable
- Learn and explore concepts collaboratively
- Understand how health content, assessments and scenarios are relevant and culturally appropriate to them
- Connect the health practices they learn to themselves, their families and their communities

Classroom artifacts:

- Show evidence that multiple perspectives are included in activities, discussions and student products
- Allow students to develop advocacy skills and demonstrate their awareness of diverse audiences
- Showcase students' ability to view and understand their local, state, national or global community through a health-enhancing lens

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System*. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm
2. RMC Health. (2020). *Health education: Health skills.* Lakewood, CO: Author. https://www.rmc.org/healthskills
3. See, for example, Cairn Guidance. (2020). *Performance assessment toolkit*. https://bit.ly/3n3xbT6
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). *Health education curriculum analysis tool*. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/hecat

Other References: SHAPE America. (2015). *Appropriate practices in school-based health education*. https://www.shapeamerica.org//publications/products/upload/Appropriate-Practices-in-School-Based-Health-Education.pdf

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Powerful Health Education Instructional Practices Model

1. Understanding Health-Related Practices
2. Adopting and Maintaining Health-Promoting Behaviors
3. Supporting Health Skill Development
4. Aligning Learning Targets to Unit Expectations
5. Designing Engaging Instruction
6. Connecting Health Practices Beyond the Classroom