

DESIGN For Teachers:

Creating Lessons that will help your students make healthier food choices

Teaching nutrition is similar to teaching other subjects -- it's important to use pre-assessment to plan learning objectives and hands-on activities that will engage students and help them integrate nutrition knowledge, understandings, and skills into their lives. Nutrition is interdisciplinary and is possible to incorporate into any subject area. Everyone eats, so kids naturally relate to food and nutrition lessons. Most importantly, effective nutrition education is focused on motivating students to engage in healthful behaviors. This means that students and teachers can see results and improvements as they happen, which is rewarding. Best of all, healthful eating and activity behaviors seem to help kids do better in academics.

DESIGN for Teachers is a guide to developing nutrition lessons that are based on effective techniques for motivating and facilitating healthy eating behaviors.

Below describes the six steps in DESIGN for Teachers.

Preassessment

- 1: Decide behaviors** — decide the specific behavior (called “behavior goal”) that you want your students to do. Some examples of behavior goals are: eat more fruits and vegetables; drink fewer sugary drinks like soda and fruit punch; eat more snacks that are whole foods such as fruit, vegetables, seeds, and nuts, and fewer snacks that are processed foods such as chips and candy; eat more foods that come from a farmers’ market or local garden.

Curriculum Development

- 2: Explore determinants of change** — “determinants” are the tools that will help your students be successful at changing toward your behavior goal. There are three kinds of determinants:
 - a. Why-to:** The attitudes and beliefs that are potential motivators of change. These can be benefits of the behavioral goal (e.g., doing better in school, staying healthier, or being better at something that is personally important like sport, dance, or playing music). These can also be creating social norms that healthy eating is cool and acceptable.
 - b. How-to:** The knowledge and skills that facilitate the change process (e.g., knowing how many fruits and vegetables a kid should eat every day or where nearby farmers markets are located; being able to calculate the amount sugar in different beverages to choose lower sugar options or knowing how to prepare a healthy snack)
 - c. Overcoming barriers:** The obstacles students may encounter as they try to change. Having students think about barriers as well as ways to overcome these, helps students integrate what they learn into the nutrition lesson into their everyday lives.

In this step, you explore how to best address these determinants for your students.

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Curriculum Development (continued)

- 3: Select subject(s), standards, and teaching points** — nutrition can naturally fit into many subject areas such as science (e.g., the digestive system, macronutrient chemistry), math (e.g., calculating percentages, comparing amounts), and social studies (food and culture, advocating for healthy school policies); it also serves as an excellent topic for reading and writing lessons and can address many different standards. Once you select your subject and standards then you can state your behavior goal as a “teaching point” in the context of the subject area in words your students will understand (e.g., “Healthy kids eat snacks that are less processed by choosing whole foods or using food labels to choose packaged foods with less sugar and salt”)
- 4: Indicate Objectives** — When developing a lesson, it is important to think about what students will know, understand, and be able to do by the end. This helps guide lesson planning, instruction, and assessment. Objectives can help students achieve the behavior goal you’ve chosen in step 1 and be specific enough that they can be measured. A useful way to format objectives is: “Students will be able to [verb]...” See the prompts on the worksheet for suggestions.

Lesson Planning

- 5: Generate Plans** — Good teachers rarely just tell their students information and expect that they will remember or use it. Instead, teachers:
- **Excite** students with an anticipatory set that orients students to the teaching point they are about to learn and motivates them to learn it
 - **Explain** to students what they need to know, understand, and be able to do by modeling through demonstrations and other teacher-led activities
 - **Expand** on the information they imparted by providing guided practice and hands-on activities so students can integrate the knowledge into their own experience.
 - **Exit** the lesson in a way that extends the teaching point beyond the classroom through assessment, goal setting, and action planning.

Posttest

- 6: Nail Down Evaluation** — When planning a lesson evaluation or assessment, it is essential to look back at the behavior and objectives you planned in earlier steps of DESIGN for Teachers and use those to develop your posttest or summative evaluation. Reflective practitioners always consider what made a lesson work and what would improve it in the future by using student outcomes as well as practical aspects including lesson completion, student engagement, and teacher efficacy.

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PREASSESSMENT

1: Decide behaviors →

Who are your students?

What behavior change goal would be most beneficial, feasible, and important for them?

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

2: Explore determinants of change →

Why to: What will motivate your students to adopt this behavior goal?

How to: What do your students need to know to adopt this behavior goal?

Overcoming Barriers: What obstacles will your students need to overcome to adopt this behavior goal?

3: Select subject, standards, and teaching points →

What subject will this lesson fit into?

What standards will you address?

What is your teaching point?

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

4: Indicate objectives →

Why to objectives:
Prompts:
Students will understand...
Students will feel...

How to objectives:
Prompts:
Students will know...
Students will be able to...

Overcoming Barriers objectives:
Prompts:
Students will have the confidence to overcome...by...

LESSON PLANNING

5: Generate plans →

How will you **excite** your students with a motivational anticipatory set activity?

How will you **explain** or model your teaching point for your students?

How will students **expand** on what you taught them through guided practice?

How will you **exit** the lesson by helping students apply what they've learned to their own life?

POSTTEST

6: Nail down evaluation →

How will you find out what students learned?

How will you find out how students changed their behavior?

How will you find out how the lesson went and how to improve it?