

Content Connections

Health



This past year, BVSD Health teachers came together and identified effective practices that align with Boulder Valley Educator Effectiveness Standards 1 and 3. The identified connections are not evaluation criteria, but rather were created to provide examples of effective classroom instruction. This is an ongoing collaborative partnership that will continue to provide targeted examples.

Standard I: Teachers demonstrate mastery and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach

What does “Effective” look like in the classroom?	
Element a – Alignment	
Connect Learning Environment	<p>Alignment in Health Education looks very similar to many other content areas in which teachers should ensure that the design of their instruction is intentional and explicit to students. The following are some examples of observable actions that would demonstrate <i>alignment</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All conversations should connect directly to CED’s. • Instruction should be skills-based; the different skills in Health Education include: goal-setting, analyzing influences, accessing valid information, interpersonal communication, decision-making, self-management and advocacy for self and others. • Here is a list of skills models. • All information provided should be medically-accurate and evidence-based. Student misconceptions regarding information is very important. • Teachers should connect to understandings learned in previous health classes and should prepare them for the next level by using real-life scenarios they will confront in the next stages of their lives. • Health teachers should partner with other people/departments in their school who are also supporting Health education (ex. counseling).
Respond to Student Misconceptions	
Collaborate Vertically and Horizontally	
Prepare Student for Next Level	
Element b – Literacy	
Provide Literacy Instruction	<p>Literacy is very important in Health Education because it is where students will gather information regarding healthy decisions throughout most of their lives. Teachers should not only be reinforcing literacy skills, but also media literacy like analyzing resources and understanding research that support claims. Some examples of observable behaviors by students include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use text/stories to analyze skills and content • Analyze different media sources for accuracy • Understand the influence of media on decision-making • Apply critical thinking to claims stated in press, social media and research articles • Use discourse to practice effective interpersonal communication
Teach Students How to Apply Literacy Skills	

Element c – Numeracy

Connections to Math	Although there are always opportunities to introduce mathematical concepts, there are a couple of specific skills that lend itself to the Health classroom. The following are examples of mathematical concepts that can be incorporated at any grade level.
Knowledge of Math Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use and analysis of statistics: Help students understand the value of statistics and how organizations/media/etc. Use statistics to cite research.● Analogies can be drawn to budget-making when looking at calorie-counting and determining good choice (nutritional calories) vs. bad choices (empty calories).● Percentages and ratios and averages are very common in many discussion of health concepts, again usually in the contexts of statistical information, and are always an opportunity to understanding the meaning of the concepts.● Turning statistical information into narrative form is a strong numeracy skill and can be done at any grade level, elementary or secondary.

Element d – Content

Appropriately Sequenced Lessons	There is a lot of content that is included in health courses, and much like other content areas, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by “Covering content” in a short period of time. As such, examining health units from a Health lens would allow teachers and students to go more in-depth in transferable skills, than becoming too focused on lower-level memorization. The skills models are listed below, and the different content can be incorporated into these skill models:
Explanations and Representation	
Inquiry Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Comprehend Concepts - Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.● Influences - Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology and other influences on health behaviors.● Access valid information - Students will demonstrate will the ability to access valid information and products and services to enhance health.● Interpersonal Communication - Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health.● Decision-Making - Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.● Self-Management - Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce risks.● Advocacy for Self & Others - Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family and community health.

Element e – Connectedness

Build Connections	Many aspects of Health Education carryover to other disciplines. Teachers should build connections to other disciplines and to long-term goals by engaging in some of the following behaviors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Health Education must be evidence-based, and are grounded in scientific (specifically biological) knowledge. Health Education has strong connections to Science standards.● Physical fitness, body image and other standards relating to physical health carry over to the physical education. Partnerships with PE would be an effective way to build connections.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocacy, analyzing media and understanding diversity are all common themes that are shared by both Health Education and Social Studies. A skills-based Health Education curriculum can resemble a Social Studies course closely. ● Literacy skills are very important in analyzing text related to Health Education as students discern positive and reliable information. Most literacy strategies can easily be implemented in Health education. Additionally dialogue and discourse are central to a Health classroom.
Element f – Relevance	
Students Make Connections	<p>Because the focus of Health Education is to ultimately provide with the skills and knowledge to make positive, lifelong decisions, building connections are essential. Therefore when delivering health instruction it is critical to make all topics relevant to the students. The following strategies are some strategies to make health curriculum more relevant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide skills-based instruction ● Utilize role-play ● Promote discussion around real-life situations or decisions ● Differentiate curriculum based on students’ concerns and needs ● Connect skills to their everyday lives (for instance how good nutrition can help them with their afterschool activities)
Addresses Learning Objectives	

Standard II: Teachers establish a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students

What does “Effective” look like in the classroom?	
Element a - Learning Environment	
Value Diverse Perspectives	<p>Health Education is a very personal discipline. It is about individual choices, developing personal values, and learning the tools for advocacy for both self and others. Creating an inclusive environment in which all students feel welcome is a lynchpin to having a successful and effective Health Education classroom. The following are just some examples of strategies to ensure an inclusive environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use inclusive language. ● Be sure to acknowledge gender, sexual and family diversity in discussions relating to gender, relationships and family. ● Provide information - not values. ● Allow time for open discussion and dialogue. ● Avoid making students the curriculum. ● Ensure the delivery of a comprehensive health curriculum.
Model Respect for Diversity	
Conducive for Learning	
Element b - Community	
Sense of Community	<p>Health Education is most effective when it is student-centered and the learning environment is rich in dialogue and discussion. Building a sense of community will enhance the ability to provide this type of environment. Here are some examples of effective strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model polite discourse ● Model how to listen actively
Effective Student Interactions	

Respect for Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote all sides of discussions ● Students/teachers respect each other through words and actions ● Allow space for all values to be expressed ● Create/support an inclusive environment
Positive Social Relationships	

Element c – Student’s Strengths

Ask Challenging Questions	<p>Because Health Education is very personal in which we are providing students with the opportunity to develop critical life skills, it is important to capitalize on their strengths to maintain student engagement. We should be challenging with questions that require critical thinking and build on their skills. Allow students time to process and provide opportunity for them to engage in smaller group discussions with people they are most comfortable. The goal is to ensure that all students are engaged and participating. It is also important to note that some conversations in Health Ed can be personal and intimate. Therefore it is important to provide opportunities to group students with peers with which they are most comfortable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide opportunities for one-on-one, small group, and large class discussion ● Provide students with the opportunity to express their views and reflections via journal writing, question and answer reflection, as well as verbal confirmation of understanding. ● Incorporate practice of life skills such as: expressing opinions, agreeing and disagreeing respectfully, as well as boundary communication.
Scaffold Questions	
Wait Time	
Flexible Grouping	
Total Student Participation	

Element d – Differentiation

Solicit Input	<p>All students have a right to a comprehensive Health education as all students need to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to lead long, happy and healthy lives. Teachers should ensure that classrooms are proactively differentiated to support a wide range of learning styles and challenges, and make sure that the curriculum is representative of all people.</p>
Differentiated Strategies	
Adapt Instructional Strategies	<p>One area of specific importance is ensuring that students that have significant developmental needs, are still access a comprehensive health education, including sexual health. There is additional support for both Health Education and Special Education, to support a partnership that helps students in this area. In addition, there is a resource guide available with more tips and strategies to ensure all student have access to a comprehensive sexuality education.</p>
Challenge and Support Students	

Element e – Home/School Connection

Partner with Families	<p>Health Education includes many conversations that are central to a family’s values and belief systems. It is imperative that frequent and proactive communication takes place between teacher, student and home to minimize conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All Health teachers are REQUIRED to send an exclusion letter home to parents prior to teaching health, specifically for grade levels that include human growth and development/sexual health. ● Any guest speakers in Health Education must be on the Approved Speaker list available on www.bvsdhpe.com. ● Encourage students to engage in discussions or ask questions with their families at home. Sample letter-writing lesson plans are available in the Comprehensive Health Handbook.
Coordinate Information	
Seek Services and Resources	
Frequent Family Communication	

Element f – Management for Learning	
Expectations Understood by Students	<p>Classroom management is especially important in the health classroom in order to build a rapport and a safe learning environment for the sensitive nature of the content. Teachers should make sure that expectations are clear and that the environment is receptive for learning. Some classroom management strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish norms that are agreed upon by everyone ● Post norms and boundaries clearly ● Refer back to the norms often ● Reduce/eliminate device usage to maintain interpersonal engagement and confidentiality ● Facilitate structured dialogue
Safe and Orderly Environment	
Appropriate Response to Misbehavior	
Maximum Use of Instructional Time	

Standard III: Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction and create an environment that facilitates learning for their students

What does “Effective” look like in the classroom?	
Element a - Child/Adolescent Development	
Adapt Lessons to Strengths and Weaknesses	<p>In addition to having knowledge of age-appropriate pedagogy for students, many questions arise regarding age-appropriate information in the context of sexual health. The most helpful and comprehensive resource for determining what is age-appropriate are the SIECUS Guidelines. These help create “levels” for age-appropriate learning, and can also be helpful in modifying curriculum for students who may have significant developmental needs.</p> <p>Strategies regarding instruction and pedagogy for other areas in Health Education would be similar to those of other content areas.</p> <p>Attending the district training routinely will also help teachers stay up-to-date with the latest best practices.</p>
Implement Modifications and Accommodations	
Knowledge of Current Developmental Science	
Collaboration with Colleagues	
Element b – Assessments	
Adjustment Based on Assessment	<p>Assessment in Health Education is a challenge because ultimately a student’s behavior and decision-making are the goals and outcomes of Health Education. However, formative assessment to make sure that students understand concepts and foundational knowledge are helpful. Students should engage in practice dialogue and role play for summative assessment.</p> <p>Self-assessments can also be a very powerful tool in Health Education where students can</p>
Encouraging Academic Risk	

Student Success	assess their own ability to make good decisions, access personal resources, and critically analyze different relationships and influences.
Element c – Effective Practices	
Clear Lesson Objectives	<p>Lesson objectives should be clear and utilize effective teaching practices. Some examples of these practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post objectives ● Use the Skills Model ● Facilitate structured and deliberate dialogue ● Engage in student-driven discussions ● Utilize role-play ● Incorporate case studies to evaluate health concepts ● Utilize simulations as a study tool ● Reference current events to relate learning to real life scenarios
Create Authentic Discussion	
Student Reflection on Learning	
Varied Instructional Strategies	
Element d – Technology	
Research Effective Technology Approaches	<p>The use of technology should be used very deliberately in the health classroom since it is important the devices don't detract from dialogue or compromise confidentiality in a safe space. Here are some examples of appropriate uses of technology in the classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research and resource (ex: ICYC - text helpline from Planned Parenthood) ● Analysis of social media - benefits and consequences ● Analysis of media influence <p>Some conversations are more appropriate in-person and face-to-face. As a result, there are many times in Health Education where the classroom could and should be a device-free zone.</p>
Develop Student Knowledge and Skills	
Engaging and Motivating Experiences	
Digital Resources	
Element e – Critical Thinking	
Meet High Expectations with Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See teacher layering material through lessons to build to final problem ie-start with end question in goals and consistently prep work to that question ● Guide students through critical thinking process ● Students identify their own problems and design solutions ● Socratic seminars, simulations, arguing perspectives ● Historiography ● Essay writing ● Research paper ● Start with end in mind ● Emphasize skills over content
Higher-Order Thinking and Problem-Solving	
Element f – Student Collaboration	
Grouping Matches Task and Needs	Peers can be valuable in Health Education as it provides an opportunities for students to practice communication within their own peer groups It is important to note, however, that

Varied Groups	<p>may conversations in health education are personal and can be values-based. Therefore deliberate choice of grouping for different activities is important. Here are some strategies for foster student collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilize role play and practice scenarios ● Vary groups based on activities ● Establish norms and boundaries to promote safe dialogue
Students' Collaborative Efforts	

Element g – Communication Skills

Model and Teach Effective Skills	<p>Establish a safe and inclusive environment in health will ensure success. Therefore it is important to model the very communication skills that are central to the Health Curriculum.</p> <p>Some ways in which teachers can build or model good communication include:</p>
Practice Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practice scenarios ● Question Box (with Question Protocol) ● Team-building activities (for example, the Human Knot) ● Sentence Stems (for example, starters for Refusal Skills)

Element h – Feedback

Frequent Feedback	<p>Health Education is skills-based in which students should be developing life skills in the context of topics like sexual health, nutrition, drugs and alcohol, or healthy relationships. Teachers are encouraged to ask students questions to allow them opportunities to explore these topics in a way that supports good decision-making and healthy behaviors. Some examples to provide feedback include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask questions ● Provide individualized feedback on students personal strengths ● Plan for time to review students work as a class or in small groups ● Review objectives/ essential questions and fill in any gaps ● Host a student conference when necessary ● Provide opportunities for students to access reliable health information via accredited resources. (i.e. ICYC texting line)
Students Using Feedback	
Informal Assessment Methods	