

## Health Skill:

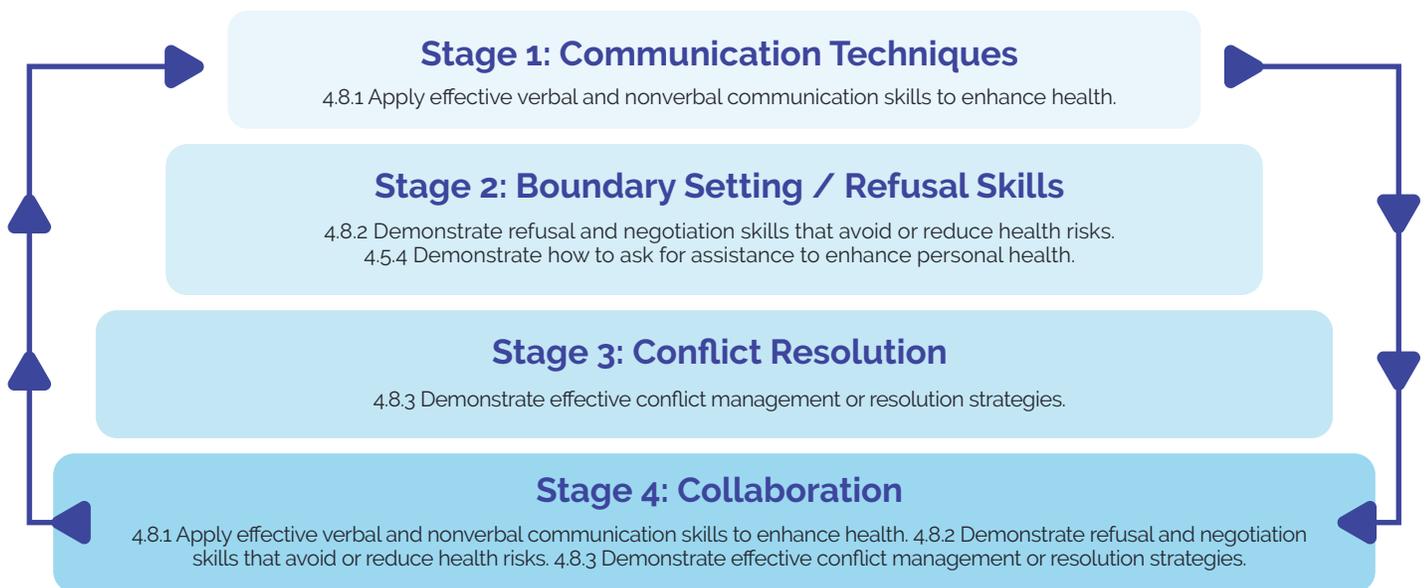
# Interpersonal Communication



## Background Information

The health skill, *Interpersonal Communication*, guides students to better understand, practice, and reflect on their interactions with others. By providing students with a safe space to practice strategies for healthy communication in school, students are more prepared to handle social situations throughout their life. The *Interpersonal Communication* health skill begins with practicing appropriate communication techniques, then explores healthy boundaries with strategies to uphold those boundaries, moving to examining the importance of productive conflict and conflict resolution, and ends with strategies to ensure effective collaboration. Each stage of *Interpersonal Communication* supports students to better understand themselves and their community, while working toward having more authentic, intentional communication with others.

The four stages of *Interpersonal Communication* are designed to support the growth of each student toward more complex levels of communication, beginning with the individual and ending with effective team work. The *Teaching Progression* for the four stages were developed in sequential order to ensure strategies build upon one another, leading to more inclusive, authentic, and collaborative teamwork. However, teachers can rearrange the stages as appropriate for their classroom.



### NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARD (NHES) 4:

Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

*National Health Education Standard Rationale: Effective communication enhances personal, family, and community health. This standard focuses on how responsible individuals use verbal and non-verbal skills to develop and maintain healthy personal relationships. The ability to organize and to convey information and feelings is the basis for strengthening interpersonal interactions and reducing or avoiding conflict.*



## Grades 6-8 Framework

In grades 6-8, students learn a variety of strategies to effectively communicate in a variety of modes. The graphic below outlines the strategies learned in each stage, beginning with *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* and ending with *Stage 4: Collaboration*. Teachers should use the strategies listed as a starting point and add strategies to meet the needs of their students.



### Notes on Grade Level Progression

Activities, vocabulary, and language throughout the models are vertically aligned and build upon one another. If students require scaffolding refer to previous grade levels for additional ideas for activities and instruction that address gaps in student skills. For enrichment activities, look at higher grade levels in order to provide additional practice opportunities or for ideas on how to deepen understanding.



## Stage 1: Communication Techniques

The health skill, *Interpersonal Communication*, begins with *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* to teach students to engage in more meaningful conversations with others. The communication techniques used in *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* are designed to help students practice effective methods of listening and speaking. It is important to keep in mind that there is not one best way to communicate. Communicating with others is personal, cultural, and part of an individual's identity. The communication strategies suggested in this model help students explore more ways to communicate with others, but these strategies are not meant to discredit other communication styles. Since communication techniques are rooted in individual culture and social norms, these techniques are suggested tools for students to incorporate into their own personal communication style. Teachers should use their knowledge of students to tailor listening and speaking strategies to meet the needs of their students and honor students' cultural backgrounds. By the end of *Stage 1: Communication Techniques*, students in all grade-levels will have the foundational tools necessary for engaging in more complex interpersonal situations. Students who master these techniques will be better equipped to engage in setting boundaries, resolving conflict, building strong teams, and advocating for themselves and others.

### The Steps:



### Grades 6-8 Framework

Appropriate and effective communication changes depending on the context, and this concept is often confusing for many middle school students, who are beginning to analyze their personal identities and where they fit in socially. Therefore, teachers should explicitly teach students different ways to effectively communicate and provide them with space to practice different communication strategies. These strategies are meant to give students options when navigating different situations. *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* for grades 6-8 allows students to practice various communication strategies as well as reflect on the impact of their communication style on others. By the end of *Stage 1: Communication Techniques*, students become more aware of their personal communication style and begin to practice different strategies to effectively convey their own message to others.

Mastery of *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* for grades 6-8 means students are able to use active listening strategies, speak with purpose, and determine appropriate speaking/listening strategies for different contexts.



## Stage 1: Communication Techniques

### The Steps:



#### Step 1: Examine the Context

**Step Overview:** Since effective communication techniques are dependent on context, students start this stage by examining changing their communication styles to match the context. The concept of context affecting communication style is developmentally appropriate for middle school students because this age group is continuously examining how they present themselves to the world. Finally, students examine how context impacts their personal communication style in their own lives and reflect on the reasons people change communication to match the context. This introduction to communication and context will support students as they develop their personal communication style in Step 2 and Step 3 of *Stage 1: Communication Techniques*.

##### Sub Skill(s):

- Define communication
- Analyze contexts
- Examine body language



#### Step 2: Listen to Others

**Step Overview:** Using effective listening strategies allows individuals to respond appropriately when someone is communicating, helping to foster relationships and support understanding. Students continue to build effective communication strategies in Step 2 by learning and practicing how to be a more engaged listener. Listening requires an individual to use appropriate body language as well as asking questions and summarizing while someone is speaking to ensure the full message or idea is being grasped.

##### Sub Skill(s):

- Define active listening
- Use appropriate body language
- Engage with the speaker
  - Ask questions
  - Summarize what you hear



### Step 3: Use Effective Speaking Strategies

**Step Overview:** After learning effective listening strategies, one must then master effective speaking strategies to convey their own ideas and messages clearly. This step provides students with the nonverbal and verbal speaking strategies they need to clearly communicate their needs, wants, and feelings.

**Sub Skill(s):**

- Use non-verbal communication effectively
  - Eye contact with the listener(s)
  - Appropriate posture
  - Appropriate hand gestures
- Use voice effectively
  - Tone
  - Inflection
  - Speed
  - Volume



### Teaching Tips

- Select listening and speaking strategies that are responsive to the needs of your classroom. Communicating with others is personal, cultural, and part of an individual's identity. The communication strategies suggested in this model help students explore more ways to communicate with others, but these strategies are not meant to discredit other communication styles.
- Since communication styles are so personal, avoid making judgements about the right and wrong ways to communicate. Instead, prompt students to think about context and whether or not a specific communication technique is appropriate or inappropriate for the context. Allow students to come to their own conclusions about appropriate and inappropriate ways to communicate.
- Provide opportunities for students to role play the different listening and speaking strategies in order for them to demonstrate the strategies in class.
- When first learning listening and speaking strategies, prompt students to tell stories or give speeches unrelated to health content. For example, students could tell a story about a family vacation, the death of a pet, or an obstacle they experienced recently.
- Pair *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* with other stages in of *Interpersonal Communication* as well as *Decision-Making*, *Goal-Setting*, *Self-Management*, and *Advocacy for Self & Others*.

See *Teaching Progression* for suggested learning activities.



## Teaching Progression:



### Step 1: Examine the Context

#### SUB SKILL(S):

- Define communication
- Analyze contexts
- Examine body language

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How does context affect how I communicate?

#### NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(4.8.1) Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.

#### VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

*communication,*  
*context,*  
*intention,*  
*social-emotional*  
*impact,*  
*body language*

### Step 1: Examine the Context | Sub Skill: Define Communication



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

To introduce the unit, begin with an activity to get students thinking about communication and the ways people communicate. Have students write their personal definition for “communication.” Ask students to share their definitions with a partner. Create a class definition from student responses. Give students a specific definition of *communication*. *Communication is the ability to successfully convey and share ideas and feelings.*

#### Language of Health Literacy:

*Communication means* \_\_\_\_\_.

*Effective communication is important because* \_\_\_\_\_.

#### TEACHING NOTES:

- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to support students in sharing their definitions and thoughts about the importance of communication.
- Use other definitions as needed by your classroom.



## Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Examine the Context (Cont.)

### Step 1: Examine the Context | Sub Skill: Analyze Contexts



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that the first step in effective communication is to determine how you should communicate depending on the context. Define *context* for students. *Context is the situation or environment in which they are communicating.* Use other definitions as needed by your classroom.

Tell students that they will practice communication techniques to be more effective communicators in various contexts. To get students to start thinking about how context affects the way they communicate, have students demonstrate greeting different people in different contexts with a partner (make a list of famous people, athletes, presidents, religious figures, etc). Ask students to think about why they chose that greeting and what impression they hope to have on the person they are meeting?

#### Language of Health Literacy:

*When I am in \_\_\_\_\_ (situation), it is important to communicate by \_\_\_\_\_.*

*If \_\_\_\_\_ (is happening), I must be aware of \_\_\_\_\_ when communicating.*

*Depending on the context, I may need to \_\_\_\_\_ when communicating.*

*I am in \_\_\_\_\_ (setting), which means I should \_\_\_\_\_ when communicating.*

*People around me are \_\_\_\_\_, which means I should \_\_\_\_\_ when communicating.*

*I need to make sure I am \_\_\_\_\_ because those are the stated rules of this setting.*

Following the context activity, have students reflect in writing. Ask students the following questions:

- How can context change the way you choose to communicate?
- Why do people change their communication style to match the context?



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Explain to students that this skill takes observing their surroundings to better gauge how to act and respond. To get students to practice changing their behavior depending on the context, have students act out how they would communicate given different contexts. Place students in small groups. Show students different images of environments that would require them to communicate with others. Have students practice observing the context by explaining the situation and acting out how they think people are expected to communicate in each environment.

Facilitate a class discussion to debrief the activity with the following questions:

- How do you know how to act in different contexts?
- What clues in a given context help you determine how to communicate?

#### TEACHING NOTES:

- Examples of different contexts: movie theater, library, concert, formal dinner.
- If time allows, students can respond to the reflection questions in writing before engaging in discussion. Use a variety of discussion strategies to ensure all students are able to participate and share ideas.



## Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Examine the Context (Cont.)



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 4:

Explain to students that understanding the context helps us know how we should speak and act. Tell students that we change our behavior depending on the context in order to match the situation. Tell students that we sometimes don't know how to act given the context.

Explain to students that the following questions can help determine how they will want to communicate depending on the context:

- What is the setting (casual, professional, school, sports, church)?
- How are other people acting or communicating?
- Are there rules in place to guide how I am expected to communicate?

Provide an example of a context to the class and model responding to the questions. Then, place students into small groups (3-4). Provide each group with an example of a context and prompt the group to answer the questions above to analyze the context.



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 5:

Tell students that they are going to create a skit to demonstrate people switching communication styles for the context. Place students into small groups (3-4) to create their skits.

Tell students that their skits need to show the audience how people switch their communication style between various environments. Explain to students that their skit must include two scenes: one where the person knows how to act and is comfortable communicating, and the second scene where a person would need to ask themselves the three questions above to figure out how to act. Have groups perform their skits for the class.

After groups present, have students write responses or discuss the following reflection questions:

- How does context influence my communication style?
- What can I do if I am unfamiliar with the context and unsure of how to communicate?
- Why is context the first step when working toward effective communication?

### TEACHING NOTES:

- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to support student writing or discussion.



## Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Examine the Context (Cont.)

### Step 1: Examine the Context | Sub Skill: Examine Body Language



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Ask students to show how they communicate excitement without using their voice. Tell students that our voice, face, and bodies tell a bigger story when we communicate. Explain to students that communication takes place with the entire body, not just our voice, and that they will explore the use of body language by watching a video of two people communicating.

#### Language of Health Literacy:

*Body language is important in communicating with others because \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Understanding body language can help people understand each other because \_\_\_\_\_.*

To demonstrate how people gain understanding from body language, show a video of a scene from a TV show demonstrating a conversation between two or more people without sound. Ask students the following questions:

- How well did the characters know each other?
- What is their relationship?
- How did the characters feel?



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Explain to students that without knowing much about the characters, we can infer a great deal about them because we are using their voice, body language, and facial expressions to create a story in our minds. Explain to students that our brains constantly and naturally do this without us having to really think about it.

Ask students to respond in writing or through discussion to the following questions to get them to think about the importance of body language in communication:

- How can your body language impact how other people see you?
- How can body language be used to better express yourself?



## Teaching Progression:

### **Step 2: Listen to Others**

**SUB SKILL(S):**

- Define active listening
- Use appropriate body language
- Engage with the speaker
  - Ask questions
  - Summarize what you hear

**GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

How does my body and voice impact the way others understand me? How can I engage in a conversation?

**NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

(4.8.1) Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.

**VALUABLE VOCABULARY:**

*intent,  
active listening,  
summarizing,  
body language,  
facial expression,  
engage*

### Step 2: Listen to Others | Sub Skill: Define Active Listening



**SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:**

Tell students that communication takes both a listener and a speaker.

Tell students that in Step 2: Listen to Others, they will learn how to use active listening strategies to truly engage in a conversation. To get students beginning to think about the importance of speaking, have students participate in an activity to test their listening skills. Place students in a circle with a small object to pass around the circle. Tell students that you are going to read a story, and every time they hear the word "right" they should pass the object to the right, and when they hear the word "left" they should pass the object to the left.

Following the activity, debrief using the following questions:

- What can this activity teach us about listening?
- How much of the story were you able to remember?
- What made it challenging to engage in the actual story?

**Language of Health Literacy:**

*Active listening is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Active listening is important because \_\_\_\_\_.*

**TEACHING NOTES:**

- See the the *Resource Bank* below for suggested stories.



## Teaching Progression: Step 2 | Listen to Others (Cont.)



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Explain to students that when we are listening, we are often also trying to do other things. This can distract us from what is being said and can lead to less effective communication between the speaker and the listener. Tell students that Step 2 is designed to help them become more effective listeners by learning active listening strategies.

Define *active listening* to students. *Active listening is when the listener works to engage the speaker's message in order to understand, rather than passively hearing what the speaker is saying.* Explain to students that actively listening creates more trust between the speaker and the audience and allows for more open communication from the speaker and deeper understanding from the listener. Ask students to share how they know when someone is listening to them. Chart student responses.

## Step 2: Listen to Others | Sub Skill: Use Appropriate Body Language



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Tell students that when they are listening they should use specific strategies to engage more with the speaker and become more active listeners. Tell students that the first strategy they will learn is appropriate body language.

Have students watch a clip from a TV show with the volume turned off. While students watch the TV show clip, tell students to answer the following questions:

- How do the characters feel?
- What is their relationship?
- What are they trying to tell each other?

### Language of Health Literacy:

*When listening to someone, I should \_\_\_\_\_ to show that I am listening to them.*

*Proximity can show \_\_\_\_ to someone I am listening to.*

*Using appropriate eye contact shows \_\_\_\_\_ to someone I am listening to.*

*Nodding and having appropriate facial expressions shows \_\_\_\_\_ when I am listening to someone.*



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Explain to students that body language is a powerful and important part of communication. Tell students that the listener's body language impacts how the speaker feels about what they are saying.

Give students the following checklist to consider for using appropriate body language:

- Proximity = How close you are to the speaker
- Eye Contact = Looking at the person as they speak
- Approving Gestures = Nodding and using welcoming facial expressions

Model for students how you would use these strategies with another student. Have the student either tell you a story or read a story. While the student speaks, use appropriate proximity, eye contact and gestures to engage in the conversation.



## Teaching Progression: Step 2 | Listen to Others (Cont.)

Next, tell students that they are going to practice using these strategies while listening to a story. Place students in pairs. Tell students that they will share with the listener a story about their own life. Have students share a story about their favorite sport, most memorable holiday, or their favorite dinner. While the speaker shares, have the partner practice proximity, eye contact, and approving gestures. When the first speaker is finished with their story, have partners switch roles.

When students complete the activity, have students reflect on these strategies in writing by answering the following questions:

- How did these strategies make you feel as a speaker?
- How did these strategies help you focus more as a listener?
- How can body language impact communication?

### TEACHING NOTES:

- As students practice with their partners, conference and provide feedback on the listening strategies observed.
- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to support student writing.

## Step 2: Listen To Others | Sub Skill: Engage With The Speaker



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Have students think about how to engage in a conversation without taking over the conversation by watching a video demonstrating appropriate questioning and commenting strategies.

After watching the video, have students debrief by answering the following questions:

- How did the listener engage in the conversation?
- What techniques did the listener use to avoid taking over the conversation?
- How did the speaker feel when the listener engaged in the conversation using questioning and comments?

### Language of Health Literacy:

\_\_\_\_\_ is interesting. How did that make you feel?

You said you \_\_\_\_\_. That reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_ in my own life.

Why did you say \_\_\_\_\_?

So you are saying \_\_\_\_\_. Is that right?

### TEACHING NOTES:

- See the *Resource Bank* below for suggested videos.



## Teaching Progression: Step 2 | Listen to Others (Cont.)



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Explain to students that active listeners also engage with the speaker by asking appropriate questions and making encouraging comments. Tell students that questions and comments should be made to encourage the speaker, not shift the attention to themselves.

Have students practice questioning and commenting by sharing with a partner or a small group a quick speech. Give students time to create a brief written presentation on a topic familiar to them. Then, place students in partners or small groups to share their brief speech. While students share their speech, have each audience member use questioning and summarizing to engage with the speaker.

Ask students the following questions to reflect on their experience during the interview process:

- What listening strategies did you use during the interview?
- Could you tell a difference in the conversation after using these strategies? Explain.
- What strategies did your partner use while you spoke?
- How did it feel to have someone practice these strategies with you?
- How can active listening impact other people?

### TEACHING NOTES:

- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to support students in engaging with the speaker.
- While students complete the listening activity, monitor their use of questioning and summarizing.
- Remind students to show engagement through appropriate body language as well as questioning and summarizing.



## Teaching Progression:



### Step 3: Use Effective Speaking Strategies

#### SUB SKILL(S):

- Use non-verbal communication effectively
  - Eye contact with the listener(s)
  - Appropriate posture
  - Appropriate hand gestures
- Use voice effectively
  - Tone
  - Inflection
  - Speed
  - Volume

#### VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

*intent, voice, tone, inflection, speed, engage, body language, posture*

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How does my body and voice impact the way others understand me?  
How can I engage in a conversation?

#### NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(4.8.1) Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.

### Step 3: Use Effective Speaking Strategies

#### Sub Skill: Use Non-Verbal Communication Effectively



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Place students into small groups (3-4). Have students brainstorm a list of different ways people express themselves to others. Encourage students to be specific and give examples. Call on several students to share the different ways people are able to express themselves to others. Make a list of the ways people communicate on the board (e.g. hands, face, body, tone, technology). Explain to students that communication takes place with the entire body, not just our voice. Explain to students that in this step they will explore the ways in which people express themselves to others and introduce effective communication techniques.



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Tell students that the first strategies they will learn to become a more effective speaker focus on non-verbal communication. Have students think about how they express themselves through non-verbal communication by participating in a game of charades.

Place students into small groups, explain the rules of charades to students, and give groups cards to act out. The cards should have familiar activities, sports, and animals for students.

Following the game, ask students to discuss the following questions:

- How did you get others to understand you without words?
- How can non-verbal cues impact communication?



## Teaching Progression: Step 3 | Use Effective Speaking Strategies (Cont.)



### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:**

Explain to students that they will focus on appropriate body language when speaking in front of a small group in a professional setting, like the school. Tell students that they need to focus on the following elements to ensure they have appropriate body language while speaking:

- Eye contact with the listener(s)
- Appropriate posture
- Appropriate hand gestures

Show students a speech given by a famous person like the president. While students watch the speech, have them imitate the body language of the speaker. Stop throughout the speech to ask students what they are noticing about the speaker.

Ask the students to debrief the video with the following questions:

- How does non-verbal communication impact the message of the speaker?
- Why is non-verbal communication an important aspect of communication?



### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 4:**

Place students into small groups (3-4) and give them images of people who are speaking and listening. Ask students to critique the images and give constructive feedback on how these individuals could improve their body language.

### **TEACHING NOTES:**

- Make sure the images have clear context to let the students know how the speaker or listener should present themselves.
- Monitor student discussions and encourage students to think about the context and the way the person is using body language.



## Teaching Progression: Step 3 | Use Effective Speaking Strategies (Cont.)

### Step 3: Use Effective Speaking Strategies | Sub Skill: Use Voice Effectively



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Tell students that one of the most powerful aspects of communication is our voice. Explain to students that our voice is much more than just what we are saying. Tell students that our tone, inflection, speed, and volume gives the audience insight into our meaning. Have students make a circle. Tell students that the way we show emotion in our voice is through tone, volume, and speed.

Give the class an easy phrase to read, like "Let's go to the movies today." Give students different tones, volumes, or speeds to read the same phrase. Go around the circle, allowing students to practice these different voice techniques.

Debrief the activity with the following question:

- How can your voice change the meaning of words?
- Which aspect of voice do you think makes the most impact?
- When do you think it can be challenging to control the different aspects of your voice?

#### Language of Health Literacy:

*Using voice effectively is important when communicating an idea because \_\_\_\_\_.*

*\_\_\_\_\_ is the most important aspect of voice because \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Tone/Inflection/Speed) of voice impacts a speaker's message by \_\_\_\_\_.*

*In order to effectively convey \_\_\_\_\_, I must \_\_\_\_\_ (strategy for voice) because \_\_\_\_\_.*

#### TEACHING NOTES:

- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to support debrief and student discussion.
- Use a variety of discussion strategies to ensure all students are able to participate and share ideas.



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Have students watch a famous speech. While they watch the speech, have students write down the voice strategies they witness being used by the speaker.

At the end of the speech, ask students the following questions to debrief the observations:

- What did you notice about the tone and inflection the speaker was using?
- What did you notice about the speed the speaker was using?
- What did you notice about the volume the speaker was using?
- Which voice did you think had the greatest impact on the audience?



## Teaching Progression: Step 3 | Use Effective Speaking Strategies (Cont.)

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Have students write a speech about a topic they are passionate about. Then, have students annotate the speech to identify which voice strategies they will want to use and why. Finally, have students present their speech to a small group. Have the students hearing the speech follow along with the annotations and provide feedback on whether or not the student was using the effective voice strategy correctly and as they intended.



See *Advocacy for Self & Others* for guidance on creating an effective health message for a variety of audiences.



## Assessing Stage 1: Communication Techniques

Students in grades 6-8 will have mastered *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* by demonstrating their ability to showcase the performance indicators identified in Standard 4. Use the student friendly language below to support rubric creation and feedback to students.

**Standard 4:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

### **4.8.1 Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.**

- I can analyze the context of a situation.
- I can determine appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication skills depending on context.
- I can use nonverbal active listening strategies.
- I can use verbal active listening strategies.
- I can use tone, inflection, and speed effectively to convey needs, wants, and feelings.

#### **ASSESSMENT TOOL #1 (4.8.1)**

Tell students that they will write a one minute speech. Give students time to reflect on the prompt and write down their speech. When students are ready, have them perform their one minute speeches with a partner. Encourage students to practice voice strategies when performing their speech. After a person shares, have the partner give one positive and one area to improve. Have students share speeches with 3-5 partners.

#### **ASSESSMENT TOOL #2 (4.8.1)**

Tell students that they are going to practice engaging an audience by writing a poem about themselves. Have students create an 'I am' poem. See an example template in the *Resource Bank* below. Have students use this poem to practice performance speaking and use of communication strategies to engage the audience. (An 'I am' poem tends to have a sentimental tone, but these poems can be funny, scary, questioning.) Have students perform their poetry to the entire class or in small groups. Complete a checklist for student performances, and have students fill out the checklist to reflect on their performance. While students are listening, have students create positive feedback for peers and have listeners review their use of listening strategies.



### ASSESSMENT TOOL #3 (4.8.1)

Place students into groups of three for a triad conversation. Assign each person one of the following roles: speaker, listener, and observer. Explain to students that the speaker talks, the listener engages, and the observer takes notes and gives feedback. Tell students that they will be each of the roles for this activity. Give students a topic that is easy for them to talk about. Have students engage in triad conversations for 2-3 minutes for each round. Provide each student with a checklist of strategies covered in Stage 1 to give feedback to listeners and speakers. After the conversations are complete, have students complete a personal reflection explaining how they believe they did and answer the following questions:

- How does my communication style impact those around me?
- When do I change my communication style?
- How do I know when I should change my strategy?
- How do I communicate to others when I don't agree with their actions?

### ASSESSMENT TOOL #5 (4.8.1)

Tell students that they are going to practice body language in different speaking and listening situations. Give students a list of recommended active listening strategies for body language (e.g. eye contact, facial expressions that show engagement, appropriate gesture), and a list of appropriate body language for speakers (e.g. hands, eyes, avoid fidgeting). *Reference Step 2 for more thorough examples of Active Listening.* Demonstrate to students how you should use your body when you are speaking. Allow students to give feedback and ask questions. Now, place students into pairs and have them practice these strategies. Give students easy topics for conversation because you want to have them focus on the body language strategies not the content of their discussion. Ask students the following questions to debrief this activity:

- How do you change your body language depending on context?
- How do you change your listening and speaking strategies depending on the situation?
- Why do people change their listening and speaking strategies depending on context?



## Content Area Connections

Build content understanding through connections with other courses. Share suggestions with teachers to develop plans for content overlap and student language connections.

The use of effective listening and speaking strategies helps to create a safe and welcoming classroom. When planning for partner or group work, use the strategies learned in *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* to reinforce healthy ways of communicating. Provide the strategies to other content area teachers, so they can use similar language and reinforce student understanding. For example, ask the Math teacher to prompt students to use active listening strategies during direct instruction of concepts.

Utilize content structures and topics in classrooms to reinforce student understanding and to support ongoing student development. *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* can be used across content areas when students are trying to communicate. Remind students to consider context when thinking through effective speaking and listening strategies.

Reinforce the understanding that effective communication can help in all areas of life by exploring the following questions with students across contents. Add specific content information in place of the italicized words as necessary. These questions are meant to be used when students are interacting with others, during partner or group work. These questions are a guide for independent reflection when students are challenged to understand how best to communicate their needs, wants, and feelings, and how others may be communicating to them.

- What listening strategies could you use during *this moment*?
- What speaking strategies were you using when *this happened*?
- What did you notice about how others were communicating in *this context*?
- How did your tone of voice impact *your message*?
- How did your body language impact *your message*?
- How could you more effectively communicate your *needs, wants, and feelings*?

### VOCABULARY REINFORCEMENT:

Utilize the vocabulary words below to reinforce student understanding and to showcase the ability to use words across content areas. For example, an entire grade-level team can decide to teach these words within the specific contexts of their classes to deepen understanding of vocabulary and language use.

*listen, speak, voice, body language, facial expressions, intent, engagement, inflection, tone, convey, message*



# Resource Bank

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## RMC Health

- [Health Education Skills Model](#)

## National Health Education Standards

- [Standards & Performance Indicators](#)

## The Wright Story

- <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/shi/pdf/training-manual/wrightfamily.pdf>

## Conversation Sentence Starters

- <https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/sentence-stems-higher-level-conversation-classroom/>

## Miscommunication Video

- <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-to-avoid-miscommunication-katherine-hampsten>

## Engaging Through Questions and Comments Video

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3\\_dAkDsBQyk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_dAkDsBQyk)

## I am Poem Template

- <https://www.greeleyschools.org/cms/lib2/CO01001723/Centricity/ModuleInstance/8575/Writing%20your%20I%20AM%20Poems.pdf>

## Engaging Speaker Examples

- [Obama](#)
- [MLK Jr.](#)