

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:

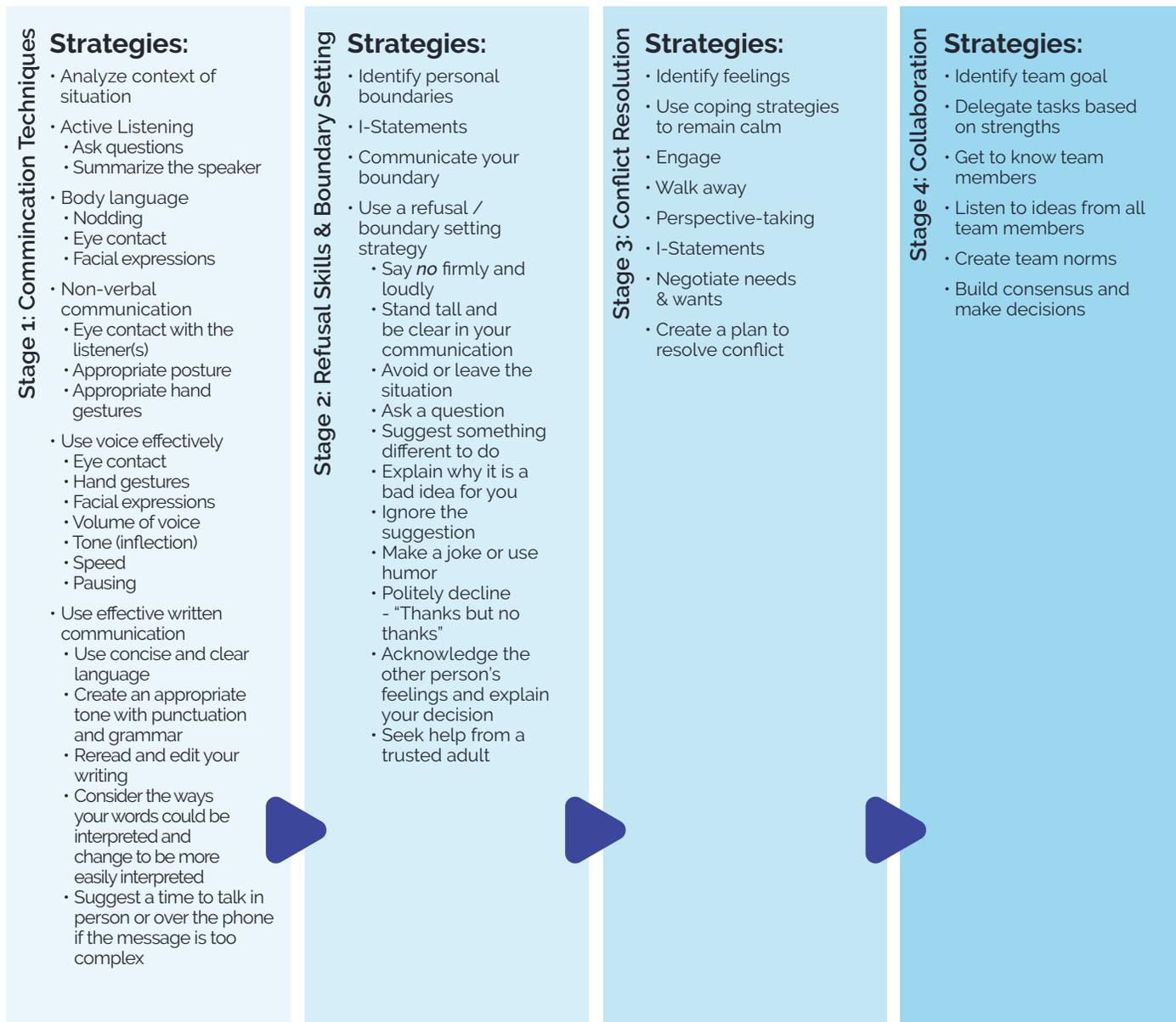
Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

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 9-12 Framework

In grades 9-12, 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 9-12 Framework

In grades 9-12, students explore effective communication strategies by examining context and personal communication styles. Communication strategies are meant to give students options when navigating different situations, but they are not meant to replace a student's chosen communication style. 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 guide help students explore more ways to communicate with others and better express their ideas, needs, wants, and feelings, but these strategies are not meant to discredit other communication styles. While the *Teaching Progression* does name specific communication strategies, teachers should select techniques that are most relevant to their students. *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* allows students to learn and 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* means students are able to analyze the context for communication, use effective listening strategies, and use effective speaking strategies.



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 how to change their communication styles to match the context. Students examine how context affects the way people choose to communicate by reflecting on how they and others change communication. Understanding context allows students to know what effective communication techniques to use. Therefore, high school students examine the use and usefulness of switching communication style based on context. The skill of switching communication style based on context is developmentally appropriate for high school students because high school students are able to rationally decide how they should present themselves to others and have the ability to develop their personal communication style to express themselves more fully. This introduction to communication and context will support students as they develop their personal communication style throughout the rest of *Stage 1: Communication Techniques*.

Sub Skill(s):

- Define communication
- Explain why contexts affects communication
- Analyze time, place, and audience



Step 2: Use Effective Listening Strategies

Step Overview: As high school students learn to communicate more using technology, explicitly teaching face-to-face communication skills, such as listening, is needed. In this step, students learn listening strategies to become more engaged participants when communicating. Students begin this step by learning the definition and rationale for active listening. This step is designed to help students explore the importance of listening to others and engaging in meaningful conversations. By learning these strategies, students will be able to more fully engage in Step 3: Use Effective Speaking Strategies.

Sub Skill(s):

- Define active listening
- Use verbal listening strategies
- Use nonverbal listening strategies



Step 3: Use Effective Speaking Strategies

Step Overview: High school students need to prepare themselves for the professional world, so the speaking strategies in this step should focus on infusing professional and personal styles of communication to allow students to better express their ideas, needs, wants, and feelings. Students begin this step by examining the impact of body language on communication and learning effective nonverbal communication strategies. Another important part of communication is written communication. Because of this, students should spend time learning strategies to craft written communication, such as emails.

Sub Skill(s):

- Use non-verbal communication effectively
- Use voice effectively
 - Tone
 - Inflection
 - Speed
 - Volume
- Use effective written communication
 - Use concise and clear language
 - Create an appropriate tone with punctuation and grammar
 - Reread and edit your writing
 - Consider the ways your words could be interpreted and change to be more easily interpreted
 - Suggest a time to talk in person or over the phone if the message is too complex



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
- Explain why contexts affects communication
- Analyze time, place, and audience

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How do I change my communication style depending on the context? Why do people change their communication styles? When do I want to change my communication style and when do I feel obligated to change? How do I use communication to express myself to others?

NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(4.12.1) Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health. (4.12.3) Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others.

VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

communication,
context,
expression,
identity

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



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Using the *Language of Health Literacy*, ask students to write their personal definition for the word *communication*. Ask students to share their definitions with a partner. Create a class definition from student responses.

Language of Health Literacy:

Communication means _____.

Effective communication is important because _____.

Give students a specific definition of *communication*. *Communication is the ability to successfully convey and share ideas, needs, wants, and feelings.* Explain to students that communication is a two-way street and to truly communicate with another person or group of people there is a conveyer and a listener.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Use other definitions as needed by your classroom.



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

Step 1: Examine the Context

Sub Skill: Explain Why Contexts Affects Communication



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Ask students to reflect on their personal communication styles by answering the following questions:

- How would you greet the following people: friends, cousin, pastor, coach, grandfather, sister? Use other examples as necessary to respond to the needs of your classroom.
- Why do you communicate differently depending on the person or context?
- How do you know when it is necessary to change communication styles depending on context?
- Where do we learn how to change our communication style depending on context?

After students discuss, explain to students that changing our communication styles often comes second nature, and we don't always realize when we are switching our communication style for a new context. Tell students that changing communication styles depending on context is not meant to have them give up their identity for the context, but rather, to acknowledge how people are communicating and make conscious choices to engage and communicate with that person more effectively.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Be aware that some people are asked to change for context more than others because their language or culture is not the dominant style of communication used for the setting. For example, people who speak languages other than English are often required to speak English to communicate in school with their teachers in the United States.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Explain to students that communication is a vital part of their identity and one of the initial ways they get to express themselves and their personality to others. Tell students that this step is designed to give them options to explore their communication style and use communication techniques to become better at expressing their ideas, needs, wants, and feelings to others regardless of the context.

Have students watch a video to explore how different people switch communication styles depending on context.

After students finish the video, have students reflect by answering the following questions:

- What examples of changing communication for context were presented?
- Why do people switch their communication styles depending on context?
- When do you change your communication style to match the context?

TEACHING NOTES:

- See the *Resource Bank* below for suggested video.
- Allow students to answer questions through a variety of modes: writing, small group discussion, or whole group discussion.



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



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Share with students that they are going to continue to think about the use of changing communication in their own life to start evaluating and determining their personal communication style.

Have students write about one of the following three questions:

- Think about a part of your personality you exhibit more outside of school. Use that personality trait to write a speech to the class to explain your identity and how it feels to change your language for the school setting.
- Tell a story of how your parents taught you to speak and what you learned from them about how to speak to people in the world.
- Tell a story of a time you used language in a way that other people did not accept or found confusing. Explain how this situation felt. What was the result? Did you change your language because of this experience?

Step 1: Examine the Context | Sub Skill: Analyze Time, Place, And Audience



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that when analyzing the context in order to best communicate there are questions they want to ask themselves. Provide students with the following questions to help them analyze the context for communication:

they want to ask themselves. Provide students with the following questions to help them analyze the context for communication:

- What is the setting (casual, professional, school, sports, religious building)?
- How are other people acting or communicating?
- Are there rules in place to guide how I am expected to communicate?
- Who is the person I am trying to communicate with?
- How does the person need me to communicate?
- How do I need the person to communicate with me?
- Is this the right time to communicate about _____?
- What might be going on around me that would make this the right time or wrong time to communicate?

Language of Health Literacy:

I am speaking to _____. Therefore, I should _____.

I am currently at _____, which means I should _____.

Right before this, _____ (happened). This may impact my ability to communicate by _____.

There (is/is not) a lot of time to discuss _____, which means _____.

In order to be heard effectively in this situation, I must _____ because _____.

In order to listen effectively in this situation, I must _____ because _____.

The rules of this space are _____, and therefore, I must _____.

Model asking and answering these questions with a context that requires you to step out of your communication comfort zone. As you come to conclusions about how the context impacts your communication, model the *Language of Health Literacy*.



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



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Tell students that they are going to practice examining context and reacting with a partner. Model for students the different ways you would greet individuals in your life. Tell students that they are going to greet their partners as if they are greeting individuals in different situations (e.g. concert, funeral, grocery store).

After modeling, read out different people (e.g. grandmother, coach, teacher) they could greet in a variety of situations. Ask students to examine how they change their communication styles. As students demonstrate greetings with their partners, monitor students and encourage them to share how they chose the appropriate communication style.

After the activity, ask students the following questions:

- How did you change your communication style depending on the person you were greeting?
- Which greeting felt most aligned to who you are as a person? Why?
- Why do we change our communication depending on the context?



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Explain to students that this step takes observing their surroundings to better gauge how to act and respond. Show students different images of environments, people, and situations that would require them to communicate with others. Using the questions from Suggested Learning Activity 1, have students practice observing the context by explaining the situation and how they think people are expected to act in each environment.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Be aware that some students will express needing to change their communication style more than others due to their identities. If they are comfortable, allow students to share these experiences and reflections.
- Examples of Places: movie theater, library, concert, formal dinner
- Examples of People: partner, parent/guardian, teacher, store clerk, police officers
- Examples of Situations: disagreeing with authority, asking for something they want, needing to be able to hear and respond to instructions.
- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to support analysis of context.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 4:

Tell students that before they continue onto Step 2, they are going to examine when they should be aware of their communication style for their personal safety. Elaborate by sharing that there are certain situations in which they need to use a calm, respectful tone to maintain their own personal safety.

Explain to students that anytime they interact with people of authority, they need to use specific language and have a specific tone and demeanor. Give students speaking cards to keep with them that cover their legal rights when talking with people in authority.

Have students watch a video about communicating with people of authority, such as police officers, doctors, etc. After students watch the video, ask students:

- What should you say to _____ when _____?
- What questions should you answer?
- What nonverbal cues should you be aware of when interacting with _____?

See Next Page For Teaching Notes.



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

TEACHING NOTES:

- See the *Resource Bank* below for suggested video from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to support students in understanding their rights when interacting with people in authority.
- See *Resource Bank* below for suggested resources on legal rights when talking with people in authority.



See *Advocacy for Self & Others* for guidance on supporting students asking for what they need in dangerous or uncomfortable situations.



Teaching Progression:

Step 2: Use Effective Listening Strategies

SUB SKILL(S):

- Define active listening
- Use verbal listening strategies
- Use nonverbal listening strategies

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How can I use verbal and nonverbal strategies to become a more active listener? How does active listening impact the listener and the speaker?

NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(4.12.1) Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health.

VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

active listening,
passive, engage,
nonverbal, verbal,
impact

Step 2: Use Effective Listening Strategies | Sub Skill: Define Active Listening



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Remind students that communication is a two-way street, meaning there is a conveyer and a listener. Tell students that they are going to begin learning specific strategies to become more effective communicators by starting with active listening strategies. Explain to students that they will start practicing communication strategies for listening. Then, they will apply similar strategies for speaking in the next stage. Define *active listening* for students. *Active listening* is *when the listener works to engage to understand the speaker's message rather than passively hearing what the speaking is saying*. Prompt students to discuss why active listening is important when trying to communicate. Chart student responses and reasons.

Language of Health Literacy:

Active listening is _____.

Active listening is important because _____.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Share with students that they will start practicing active listening strategies by playing a round of the game telephone. Explain to students that this game is intended to have students focus on what it means to listen well to others. Start the round of telephone by saying the phrase, "I want you to hear what I am saying, and I want to be able to express myself fully in this classroom." Students quietly whisper this sentence down the line until it reaches the last student in the class. The last student says the statement out loud to the entire class. The message will be changed by the end of the activity.

Have students debrief this activity by answering the following questions:

- What happened to the message during this game of telephone?
- What made it difficult to keep the message the same for the entire game?

After the activity, explain that when we are listening, many factors influence how we hear someone. Context, volume, and nonverbal cues give us the ability to better understand someone's message. It is important for us to pay attention to the speaker and be aware of how we are presenting ourselves so the speaker feels comfortable to share.



Teaching Progression: Step 2 | Use Effective Listening Strategies (Cont.)

Step 2: Use Effective Listening Strategies Sub Skill: Use Verbal Listening Strategies



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Have students listen to an interview to observe verbal active listening strategies modeled.

Following the interview, have students answer the following reflection questions:

- How could you tell the interviewer was truly listening to the person they were interviewing?
- What strategies did you hear that helped the interviewer engage in the story?
- How do you think the person being interviewed felt at the end of the conversation?
- How can effective listening strategies make an impact on another person's life?

Language of Health Literacy:

How does _____ make you feel?

I am hearing you say _____.

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

That is such an interesting idea.

You seem to really understand _____.

Sounds like you are passionate about _____.

Why did you say _____?

I once experienced something similar in my life. It made me feel _____.

TEACHING NOTES:

- See the *Resource Bank* below for suggested interview video.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Provide students with a list of verbal active listening.

Strategies can include:

- Asking questions
- Verbal confirmation
- Making connections to what is said
- Encouraging and affirming ideas
- Confirming the speaker's message

Tell students that all of these strategies can be used in conversations with individuals, and that some of these strategies can be used even when they are an audience member to a speaker. Give students time to create a brief written presentation on a topic familiar to them. Then, place students in pairs or small groups (3-4) to share their brief speech. While students share their speech, have each audience member use the verbal strategies for active listening.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Use additional strategies as needed in your classroom.
- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to help students use verbal active listening strategies.



Teaching Progression: Step 2 | Use Effective Listening Strategies (Cont.)

Step 2: Use Effective Listening Strategies

Sub Skill: Use Nonverbal Listening Strategies



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Have students watch a video to examine active listening strategies that are non-verbal. While the video is playing, tell students to make a list of the non-verbal active listening strategies they hear explained.

When the video is over, create a class list of strategies students can use to be more active listeners. Tell students that they are going to practice non-verbal listening strategies with a partner:

- Hand and body gestures
- Pausing and not interrupting
- Encouraging facial expressions
- Proximity

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.

TEACHING NOTES:

- See the *Resource Bank* below for the suggested video.
- Use additional non-verbal listening strategies to meet the needs of your students.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Display a series of pictures showing people with different body language. Have students stand up if the image shows a person that is engaged and have students sit down if the image shows a person who is annoyed or disengaged.

Following the activity, have students turn and talk to a partner about the following questions:

- How does body language impact how another person sees you?
- How can body language be used to make people feel welcome and comfortable?
- How can body language be used to make people feel uncomfortable?



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Place students in pairs. Have one student present a speech about a topic with which they are familiar. The other student should practice the nonverbal listening strategies. At the end of the speech, instruct students to evaluate the use of the listening strategies. Then, prompt students to switch roles.



Teaching Progression:

Step 3: Use Effective Speaking Strategies

SUB SKILL(S):

- Use non-verbal communication effectively
- Use voice effectively
 - Tone
 - Inflection
 - Speed
 - Volume
- Use effective written communication
 - Use concise and clear language
 - Create an appropriate tone with punctuation and grammar
 - Reread and edit your writing
 - Consider the ways your words could be interpreted and change to be more easily interpreted
 - Suggest a time to talk in person or over the phone if the message is too complex

VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

*communication,
expression,
professional,
verbal, nonverbal,
coping strategies,
public speaking*

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How do I use communication strategies to express myself? How do I use digital communication to express my needs? How do I use communication strategies to become a better public speaker?

NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(4.12.1) Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health.

Step 3: Use Effective Speaking Strategies | Sub Skill: Use Non-Verbal Communication Strategies



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. Also, tell students that an important way we communicate in modern society is through technology. Explain to students that in this step they will explore the ways in which people express themselves to others and introduce effective communication techniques.



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



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Have students watch 3 minutes of a TV show without sound. Instruct students to write down what they think the characters are saying to each other. After the video, have students turn to a partner to discuss what they thought the people on the show were saying.

Then, debrief the video with the following questions:

- What were the nonverbal cues you observed?
- How did these cues give you context for the conversation?

TEACHING NOTES:

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



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Next, have students watch a different 3-5 minutes of the same video with sound. While students watch, have them write down examples of effective speaking strategies they observe.

After 3-5 minutes of observing, ask students to turn to a partner and discuss the following questions:

- How did the characters feel?
- What were the main ways the characters communicated with one another?
- What elements of communication did you observe? Give an example from the video.

Have students rewatch the section they observed first without sound, but this time with the sound on. While students watch, have students write down any misunderstandings they had from watching the video without sound.

When the video is over, have students turn to their partner to discuss the following questions:

- What were the main elements of communication you observed in the show?
- What elements of communication were missing from this example?
- How does nonverbal and verbal communication contribute to your understanding of a situation?



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 4:

Place students in small groups (3-4). Provide each group with different emotions (e.g. frustrated, disappointed, excited, stressed, calm, happy). Instruct students to act out the emotion with their body using different nonverbal communication strategies while the other members of the group try to guess which emotion the student is acting out. Then, have all the students act out the same emotion at the same time in their groups.

At the end of the activity, debrief with students by asking the following questions:

- How did you know how to act out each emotion?
- How did you know what emotion someone was portraying?
- How did each person portray their emotions differently? Why is this important when understanding others and showing how you feel?



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 watch a video of a famous speech. While students watch the video, tell them to make a list of the strategies they observe.

After the video, have students share their list with their partner. Then, make a class list from student examples. The class list should include the following elements:

- Eye contact
- Hand gestures
- Facial expressions
- Volume of voice
- Tone
- Inflection
- Speed
- Pausing

TEACHING NOTES:

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



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

After the class has created a list, have students watch another famous speech. Tell students to raise their hand every time they hear or see a speaking strategy they listed from the previous example.

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

- What nonverbal strategies did you observe?
- What verbal strategies did you observe?
- How can these strategies influence the audience?
- Which strategy did you think had the greatest impact on the audience?



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Have students practice speaking strategies for speeches by preparing for a brief, low-stakes public speaking activity. Have each student answer the following questions or a question specific to the content you are teaching:

- One word to describe you.
- One object that relates to you.
- One person who influences you.
- Your stance on a topic that impacts the health of young people.

Have students practice making eye contact, using appropriate volume, using appropriate tone, and using appropriate hand gestures with a partner. Next, have students present their mini-speeches to the class. After each speech, solicit 1-2 positive comments from peers, citing a speaking strategy they used well.



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

Step 3: Use Effective Speaking Strategies | Sub Skill: Use Effective Written Communication



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Share with students that they express themselves through written communication, such as emails, text messages, and posts online. Tell students that they are going to examine the impact of their words in digital communication by first examining casual conversations with friends.

Place students in pairs or small groups (3-4). Give students a series of text message conversations for them to analyze.

Ask students to explain the following for each conversation:

- How do the people feel?
- What are they really asking for from the other person?
- What is the relationship between the two people?

Reveal the “true” meaning behind each text and debrief with students using the following questions:

- Did you get the actual meaning of the texts?
- Why was it difficult to understand the author’s intended purpose?
- What would help you better know how the author actually felt?

Language of Health Literacy:

I would appreciate the opportunity to _____.

I was hoping to discuss the following issue/idea with you. Would you be willing to meet to discuss this further?

Thank you for your time.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Make the text conversation have unclear intentions. For example, some text messages can be interpreted as mad or worried as seen in this text: “Where are you?! I’ve been waiting for 20 minutes. Are you even okay???” Reveal the intended meaning, so students can compare to their own interpretation.
- Provide multiple examples to allow students ample practice in identifying and analyzing the intended message of the text exchange.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Explain to students that they need to be aware of how their words can be interpreted when there is an absence of vocal tone, inflection, and nonverbal cues for the reader. Explain to students that they need to evaluate context and intent when crafting digital communications, and to be aware that their words may be misinterpreted.

Tell students that the following strategies can be used when communicating digitally to avoid misunderstanding:

- Use concise and clear language
- Create an appropriate tone with punctuation and grammar
- Reread and edit your writing
- Consider the ways your words could be interpreted and change to be more easily interpreted
- Suggest a time to talk in person or over the phone if the message is too complex



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



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

To practice using these strategies, give students examples of online communication that contains common mistakes that students can address. Have students read the examples and revise each example applying the strategies provided.

After students complete the edits, have students reflect on the strategies by writing answers to the following questions:

- How can clear and concise language help to avoid misunderstanding?
- What punctuation should you use to provide a professional tone?
- What strategies do you think you should use more in digital communication and why?

TEACHING NOTES:

- Examples of online communication: emails, texts, and social media posts.
- To incorporate movement, place the communication examples on the walls around the room and have students write on the examples or use post-its.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 4:

Tell students that it is especially important for them to practice using a professional tone when writing an email to a teacher, employer, or authority figure. Provide students with a sample email template to practice writing a professional email. Have students send you a professional email to practice professional digital communication.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Model and provide the *Language of Mastery* below to support students creating an appropriate tone in digital communications.



Assessing Stage 1: Communication Techniques

Students in grades 9-12 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.

4.12.1 Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health.

- I can define communication.
- I can explain why people change communication styles for different contexts.
- I can determine how to use communication skills to express myself regardless of the context.
- I can explain the purpose of active listening.
- I can name and implement nonverbal strategies for active listening.
- I can name and use verbal strategies for active listening.
- I can use nonverbal communication strategies to better express myself to others.
- I can express my ideas appropriately when communicating digitally with others.
- I can use effective speaking strategies to perform a public speech to my peers.

ASSESSMENT TOOL #1 (4.12.1)

Provide students with scenarios describing a variety of contexts and purposes. Prompt students to analyze the scenarios to demonstrate how they would react in the scenarios depending on the context.

Following the scenario analysis, students answer the following reflection questions:

- Why do you think people switch communication styles depending on context?
- How does switching your communication style for the context impact you and your daily communication style?
- When do you find yourself communicating in a way that is most outside of your comfort zone?

Collect responses and reflection questions to gain better insight into how your students interact with changing communication styles based on context in their own lives. Use this information to engage with students to better help them use communication strategies to best fit the situations they face.



ASSESSMENT TOOL #2 (4.12.1)

Have students create a “How To” speech to demonstrate the strategies for effective public speaking. Structure the process for the speech as follows:

1. Write your speech
2. Practice with a small group
3. Edit and practice independently
4. Present

Before students begin writing their speech, provide them with an outline and model speech as an example. Example speeches, speech outlines, and guidelines are available in the *Resource Bank* below. When students practice their speech, provide group members with a checklist and specific language for providing feedback. Have students present to the whole class or in small groups. As students present their speeches, have the audience complete the checklist and provide feedback. Allow students to complete a self-assessment of speaking strategies.

Before students present their final speeches, give students coping strategies for handling nerves during public speaking.

ASSESSMENT TOOL #3 (4.12.1)

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 gestures), and a list of appropriate body language for speakers (e.g. hands, eyes, avoid fidgeting). Reference Step 2 and Step 3 for more thorough examples of active listening and effective speaking strategies. 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?

ASSESSMENT TOOL #4 (4.12.1)

Place students into small groups and give them images of people who are speaking and listening. Make sure the images have clear context to let the students know how the speaker or listener should present themselves. Ask students to critique the images and give constructive feedback on how these individuals could improve their body language. Have students write down their responses. Monitor student discussions and encourage students to think about the context and the way the person is using body language. Collect student responses and use this information to gauge student understanding of speaking and listening strategies.



ASSESSMENT TOOL #5 (4.12.1)

Give students 3-5 minutes to write about what makes them most happy in life. Tell students not to worry about wording because they will be having a conversation rather than giving a speech. Place students in pairs. Have students practice interviewing their partners for three minutes. While they are interviewing their partners, they should be using gestures, proximity and questions. Provide students with a model for appropriate gestures and proximity (closeness).

Following the activity, have students reflect on the experience. Ask students the following questions:

- 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?

ASSESSMENT TOOL #6 (4.12.1)

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: Communication Techniques* to give feedback to listeners and speakers.

After the conversations are complete, have students complete a personal reflection explaining how they believe they did in their conversation by answering 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?



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 *ideas, 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

RMC Health

- [Health Education Skills Model](#)

National Health Education Standards

- [Standards & Performance Indicators](#)

Know Your Rights - ACLU Video and Handouts

- <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/stopped-by-police/>

Story Corp Tips for Active Listening

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ho2vuSd_6c4

Topics for “How To” Speeches

- <https://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199861620/student/speechtopic/howto/>

3 Ways to Speak English

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9fmJ5xQ_mc&feature=youtu.be

How to Read Body Language

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqixzdpJL4U>

How to Write a Speech

- <https://www.write-out-loud.com/howtowritespeech.html>

Story Corp Interview: Teacher and Student Audio

- <https://storycorps.org/stories/aaron-and-celeste-davis-carr/>

Transcript

- <https://storycorpsorg-staging.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/SC.PowerOfActiveListening.Celeste-DavisCarrTranscript.pdf>

Engaging Speaker Examples

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

“How To” Speech Example

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ntYZjkogWM