

Suggested Guidelines for Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness Labs

The instruction which students receive in the Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness course may be the only formal education they will ever have in nutrition. Plan for essential learning experiences. The following are suggested guidelines. Be sure to check with your school district for guidance.

Planning

- Students who enter a Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness class are very anxious to cook. Capitalize on that motivation! However, there are many interesting and exciting experiences with foods which do not involve cooking. Be enthusiastic about those as well. Nutrition concepts should be an integral part of every lab experience.
- Integrate concepts which require short periods of development as multiple activities in the lab.
 - For example, teach table manners along with food preparation and management.
- Planning prior to the beginning of the course is absolutely essential for effective use of resources.
- Lab rules should be decided before the first lab so that the lab experience for the students runs smoothly. The following items should be discussed with your students:
 - **Time** – remind students that labs begin promptly when the bell rings so that they may complete their lab in the allotted time
 - **Personal belongings** – backpacks, purses, and other items should be stored away from the kitchen so that items are not in the way. Jewelry should also be removed and stored in a safe place
 - **Personal hygiene** – hair should be pulled back, hands washed, and clean aprons worn the day of lab (hair nets may be provided if studying for food safety)
 - **Food safety** – remind students of food safety rules learned in prior lesson
 - **Duties** – explain the duties and responsibilities for each person in the group
 - **Teamwork** – remind students that the lab experience is a group activity and everyone should work together to complete the lab. No one in the group should leave the lab until the kitchen is checked and they are dismissed
 - **Laundry** – explain laundry procedures

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- **Absence from lab** – explain how a student who is absent the day of lab can make up the lab grade
- **Other** – anything else that is important for a successful lab

Food Costs

- The teacher with a limited budget may include valuable experiences by practicing some of the following suggestions:
 - Use low cost food when possible (for example, cabbage slaw instead of tossed green salad, green beans instead of broccoli, meat patties instead of pork chops, plain cake instead of chocolate cake).
 - Utilize the USDA's Snap-ED Connection cookbooks found in the resource section of the Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness home page. Most of these recipes have only five ingredients and include the nutritional and cost analysis.
<http://cte.sfasu.edu/rgroup/lifetime-nutrition-and-wellness/page/2/>
 - Demonstrate food preparation skills instead of having labs.
 - Have tasting events instead of food preparation labs.
 - Limit the number of lab experiences to those needed for developing only the basic nutrition and wellness concepts, preferably following the five ChooseMyPlate food groups.

Demonstrations

- Demonstrate a food preparation technique before each lab experience. Remember, if students already know how to prepare a food, it should be used as a lab experience. If students do not have the skill, a demonstration will be better to ensure their acquiring the skill.
- When giving a demonstration, provide each student with a copy of the recipe.
- Involve one or two students as “guest chefs” to assist in the preparation.
- Allow students to sample the product using disposable containers (paper plates, wide Popsicle sticks, sporks, and small paper cups) to save time with dishwashing.

Lab Experience

- Instruction in nutrition should be a part of each lab experience planned for Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness classes.
- Lab experiences should be used to build nutrition concepts and food preparation and management skills. These experiences should be interspersed throughout

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the course. Avoid separation of instruction in nutrition from that of food preparation.

- Divide class into lab groups by drawing numbers at random. Explain to students that we do not get to choose who we work with when we become employed and we should be able to get along with other workers or team members.
 - For example: Allow students to choose their own lab partners by drawing numbers for their groups. If they draw a number one, the student is in group one, and so forth. Number according to the number of groups that your kitchen lab can accommodate. This way they “select” their own group.
- Each member of a lab group should have some food preparation responsibility during each lab experience.
- In deciding whether each lab group is to prepare the same product in a lab experience, be guided by the objectives for the class. If the objectives are to develop a specific principle, then each group must prepare the same type of food. If the objective is to see variety available within a certain category, then different laboratory units may prepare different foods.
 - For example: If one skill to be acquired is proper handling and preparation of salad greens, then each student group must prepare a green salad.
 - If, on the other hand, the objective is to see variety in salads, then each group may prepare a different type of salad.

Evaluations

- Each lab experience should be evaluated in terms of the knowledge and skills which will be reached for each student who participates.
 - For example, if four students are in a group and only one has the experience kneading dough, then only one student will develop the skill of preparing dough properly. The other students missed the experience.
- Evaluations which follow lab experiences should be much broader than just checking for quality of product and efficiency in preparation.
- The major learning from lab experiences may well be the experiences which follow the lab.
- Encourage students to practice at home what they have learned in class.
- If your school district offers Culinary Arts in the Hospitality and Tourism Cluster, encourage your students to return to learn more advanced baking and cooking techniques skills.