



Gold Standards for a Cooking Matters Course

Standard	Dimensions of Standard	Priority Level ***Critical **Important	Indicators that dimension has been meet <i>Examples of evidence you might observe or document to prove this dimension may be met.</i>
1. Curricula (content and materials) is delivered.	Food & Kitchen Safety information and skills are presented and encouraged.	***	Instructors make sure participants wash their hands with soap and handle knives and other tools (e.g., graters) safely. Key sanitation and cross-contamination content is explained and reinforced each week during cooking. A safe environment is maintained in the classroom and kitchen (i.e., safety around hot foods or sharp items).
	Food Resource Management information and skills are presented and encouraged.	***	Instructors discuss what foods they can use in several recipes to maximize resources, ask participants to describe strategies they use to stretch ingredients when preparing meals at home, help participants practice preparing meals from scratch rather than purchasing pre-packaged or foods away from home. Instructors also suggest affordable forms of healthy foods, as well as storage techniques to make food last longer. In lessons 4 and 5, instructors discuss and practice, where appropriate, strategies such as comparing unit prices, making a list before shopping, referring to store fliers or sale items.
	Information and skills regarding Healthy Eating are presented, practiced and encouraged (Food Skills).	***	Instructors engage participants in discussion on solutions for challenges to eating healthy. Instructors teach and reinforce MyPlate as a reference for healthy eating, and teach and reinforce the food label and ingredients list as key tools in making healthy choices. Instructors ask participants about their application of skills to make foods healthier (herbs substituted for salt, whole grain substituted for refined, etc.) Instructors help participants discuss strategies for balanced eating and ideas to incorporation of fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy and lean protein.
	Information and skills regarding cooking and meal preparation are presented and encouraged.	***	Culinary Instructor interacts with students by explaining verbally while they demonstrate key/basic cooking techniques and give feedback to participants while they are practicing the new techniques. The Culinary Instructor uses the recipe to explain cooking techniques that can be applied to different recipes and situations, as well as articulating and explaining the fundamental cooking techniques that are being used in the Cooking Matters recipe. Instructors encourage participants to use their take home groceries to prepare meals at home, ask participants what recipes from the book they plan to make that week, and ask participants to share their experiences making Cooking Matters recipes at home.

	Participants receive Cooking Matters materials that correspond to the chosen curriculum.	***	Did participants receive take-home groceries, books/manuals, and incentives (as applicable) during the course? (Yes/No)
	Instructors discuss course materials with participants.	**	Instructors refer to handouts, recipes, incentives, and/or posters during class discussion and use the information presented to elaborate on a topic or encourage participants to apply knowledge through simple questions, instructors point out times when participants might refer back to the handout information in their everyday life.
2. Instructors use intended methods of content delivery.	Activities are participatory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants cook together • Participants eat together 	***	Participants prep ingredients, put recipes together, cook, clean up, and troubleshoot any challenges that arise. Everyone sits together (ideally around a table) and eats at the same time. Participants are engaging in discussion or are continuing with cooking/nutrition course content while eating. Instructors and other volunteers eat food with the group.
	Facilitated dialogue is used.	***	Instructors appropriately mix presenting information to participants and asking them open-ended questions to assess their level of comprehension and ability to apply the information. They ask for participant impressions of the information, how they might or might not use it, and what reservations they have about the new information and strategies. Participants are asked to share their strategies and others are asked to respond to their impressions of whether that would work for them or not.
	Course content builds each week.	**	Instructors refer back to key content throughout the class. If it is not the first class, instructors refer back to content from previous classes to reinforce the learning process. Instructors make connections between new information and topics previously discussed, help participants understand the relationship between the information being presented, and reinforce key skills related to cooking and food safety.
	Team-teaching is used.	**	Instructors refer to what each other has said, ask for the other instructor to contribute to the discussion based on their knowledge/expertise, share in the elaboration of specific concepts/ideas.
3. Class reaches intended audience.	Participants match target population.	**	Participants belong to low-income families; or audiences that provide or prepare food for children.
	Class size is within ideal range for curricula type.	**	Cooking Matters courses should serve an average of at least 10 participants per class. It is recommended that all classes have no fewer than 8 and no more than 15 participants.
4. Coordinator manages/facilitates class and supports instructors.	Course materials are effectively managed.	**	Instructors are given instructor guide at least 2 weeks before course begins. All necessary paperwork (waivers, enrollment forms, surveys, course books) are available to participants on the first day of class. Appropriate cooking tools are available for effective teaching. All equipment and food arrives clean and is put away clean and dry. Cold ingredients are kept cold during class. Take home materials such as groceries, incentives, etc are available and prepared.
	Coordinator supports and manages class proceedings.	***	Coordinator effectively corrects mis-information provided by instructors, steers the class so it is back on track if distracted, and coaches the course team.
5. Instructors demonstrate expertise in topic and competence leading class.	Course is fully staffed.	***	Courses are staffed by a course team that includes a qualified culinary instructor, qualified nutrition instructor, and a trained course coordinator.
	Instructors demonstrate knowledge of subject matter being taught.	***	Instructors can answer subject-specific questions, draw on knowledge and past professional experience, are comfortable saying when they don't know something but have the resources/know-how to find out and provide an answer the following week.

	Instructors are prepared and organized.	**	The class is set up well and materials are staged appropriately. Instructors have talked about how to implement and transition within the lesson and do so without confusion. Lesson objectives are outlined for participants.
	Instructors and coordinators keep class on schedule.	**	Class starts and ends on time, instructors stay within suggested time for each lesson plan component. Instructors and coordinator respect participants' time. Coordinator keeps class on track.
6. Positive Learning Environment is created and maintained.	Kitchen/Meeting room space is conducive for delivering a Cooking Matters course.	***	Location allows for effective course delivery such that participants can interact with instructors and engage in cooking and other lesson activities. Sinks are available for hand washing, dish washing; and there are adequate table and chairs. Distractions related to the host site are limited (doors closed to cut down on noise, childcare provided, etc).
	Course team demonstrates respect and cultural sensitivity for participants and their life experiences.	***	Course team encourages participants to share their impressions/experiences in life, empathize with participants, and don't stand for putting others' ideas down. Instructors remind participants about respect for other's opinions and life experiences and don't belittle people for where they are in life. Course team demonstrates cultural sensitivity by ensuring that the dietary restrictions and/or cultural or special needs backgrounds of participants are respected and considered in recipe/activity selection and discussion.
	Course team builds a welcoming atmosphere.	***	Course team is friendly and polite. They welcome participants as they enter and try to make a personal connection with them. They encourage sharing among participants and redirect when someone discredits, chastises, or bad mouths their peer as they share ideas. Team maintains composure when dealing with a dominant or disobedient participant.
	Instructors/coordinators manage inappropriate behaviors.	**	Instructors set ground rules with participants and refer to them when behaviors are inappropriate in effort to manage disruptions for the rest of the group. They manage discussions that are off topic as well as other disruptive behavior.