

HECAT: Chapter 5

Curriculum Fundamentals

Description: This chapter contains the tools to help analyze and score important characteristics that are fundamental to the review of any curriculum; they are applied here to health education curricula. These include the curriculum design, culturally responsive and inclusive characteristics, learning objectives, teacher guidance and preparation, instructional strategies and materials, and student assessment. Because teaching health skills and promoting healthy personal and social norms are fundamental to health education, this chapter also contains questions to guide the assessment of these curriculum characteristics. The curriculum fundamentals analysis should be completed by persons who understand curriculum design, instruction, assessment, and health education content (e.g., health education coordinators, teachers, curriculum specialists, school principals, assessment specialists, and persons who work with young people.)

The HECAT is designed to guide the analysis of curricula for local use. Users are encouraged to revise or replace items to reflect community needs and to meet the curriculum requirements of the school district.

Directions: Assess a curriculum guided by the criteria asked in 8 fundamental areas:

1. Curriculum Design
2. Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Characteristics
3. Learning Objectives
4. Teacher Guidance and Preparation
5. Instructional Strategies and Materials
6. Teaching Health Skills
7. Student Assessment
8. Promoting Healthy Norms.

For each fundamental area, check each criterion that applies to the health education curriculum under review.

When reviewing a comprehensive health education curriculum (CHE),¹ assess the criteria in all 8 fundamental areas to determine if each is met for most or all of the topics and grade spans. Complete the additional fundamental analysis, Continuity and Uniformity of CHE Curriculum.

Add up the total number of checks to arrive at a summary score for each fundamental area. Record notes and comments to justify scores and to inform group discussions and decisions.

Transfer scores to the appropriate Curriculum Fundamental line on the Chapter 3, *Overall Summary Form*.

¹ A comprehensive curriculum is one that is broad in scope and content; addresses numerous health problems, issues, or topics; focuses on more than one grade level; and includes a wide range of learning activities to address multiple health outcomes.

Name of the Curriculum: _____			
Grade spans addressed by the curriculum (Check any that apply)			
Pre-K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12

Complete the **Curriculum Design** score by checking the box for each criterion that applies to the curriculum under review and summing the checks. When reviewing a comprehensive health curriculum (CHE), check only when the criteria is met for most or all of the topic areas and grade spans.

Curriculum Design—Check the box if:

Criteria Met

1. The design, colors, graphics, and language are engaging, appropriate, and current.
2. Most or all of the necessary support materials, such as student texts, teacher guidance, audiovisuals, and teaching aids, are provided to achieve the learning objectives.
3. Most or all of the time a progressive sequence has been established so that each lesson plan reinforces content and skills covered in the one before it and sets the stage for the next one.
4. Most or all learning experiences reinforce adopting and maintaining specific health-enhancing behaviors.

Curriculum Design Score

(Total number of checks)



Transfer this score to the *Curriculum Design* line on the *Overall Summary Form* (Chapter 3).

Notes:

Name of the Curriculum: _____

Grade spans addressed by the curriculum (Check any that apply)

Pre-K–2

3–5

6–8

9–12

Complete the **Culturally Responsive and Inclusive (CR&I) Characteristics**¹ score by checking the box for each criterion that applies to the curriculum under review and summing the checks. When reviewing a comprehensive health curriculum (CHE), check only when the criteria is met for most or all of the topic areas and grade spans.

CR&I Characteristics—Check the box if:

Criteria Met

1. Tailors health content and skills to specific student demographics (e.g., race, ethnicity, sex, age, grade), identities, health behaviors, and lived experiences.
2. Consistently incorporates diverse identities, cultures, narratives, and beliefs throughout curriculum lessons, activities, and assessments.
3. Considers the social determinants of individual and community health from diverse social, cultural, political, and historical contexts across health topic areas.
4. Provides opportunities for students to think critically about individual (e.g., implicit bias) and systemic (e.g., institutionalized racism) factors that perpetuate health disparities and serve as barriers to health equity.
5. Incorporates strategies to help students navigate or combat stressors (e.g., discrimination, harassment, stereotypes) and systems of oppression² that negatively impact health.
6. Features data, scenarios, and examples that communicate a positive framing of health and human development; representing people of diverse races, classes, sexes, genders, abilities, and sexual orientations through strengths, achievements, and assets rather than perceived deficits.

CR&I Characteristics Score

(Total number of checks)



Transfer this score to the *Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Characteristics* line on the *Overall Summary Form* (Chapter 3).

Notes:

¹ Adapted from: J. Bryan-Gooden, M. Hester, & L. Q. Peoples (2019). *Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard*. New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University

² Any system designed to hinder a group of individuals (usually a minority) from accessing resources and privileges available to another.

Name of the Curriculum: _____			
Grade spans addressed by the curriculum (Check any that apply)			
Pre-K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12

Complete the **Learning Objectives** score by checking the box for each criterion that applies to the curriculum under review and summing the checks. When reviewing a comprehensive health curriculum (CHE), check only when the criteria is met for most or all of the topic areas and grade spans.

Learning Objectives—Check the box if:

Criteria Met

1. The learning objectives address cognitive, affective, and skills domains.
2. Most or all of the learning objectives are written clearly and measurable.
3. Most or all of the learning objectives address important concepts and skills that support healthy behavior outcomes. *(See page 1 of each relevant Chapter 6 health topic module for a list of applicable Healthy Behavior Outcomes)*
4. Most or all of the learning objectives are consistent with health education standards or course of study.

Learning Objectives Score

(Total number of checks)



Transfer this score to the *Learning Objectives* line on the *Overall Summary Form* (Chapter 3).

Notes:

Name of the Curriculum: _____

Grade spans addressed by the curriculum (Check any that apply)

Pre-K-2

3-5

6-8

9-12

Complete the **Teacher Guidance and Preparation** score by checking the box for each criterion that applies to the curriculum under review and summing the checks. When reviewing a comprehensive health curriculum (CHE), check only when the criteria is met for most or all of the topic areas and grade spans.

Teacher Guidance and Preparation—Check the box if:

Criteria Met

1. Background information is provided to ensure the teacher has sufficient knowledge about the health topic.
2. Clear, step-by-step procedures are provided to implement the curriculum.
3. Essential learning materials, handouts, assessment strategies and other instructional tools are provided to reduce teacher preparation time.
4. Guidance is provided to help the teacher adapt materials or differentiate instruction based on students' learning needs.
5. Guidance is provided on being aware of one's biases and the gaps between one's own culture and students' cultures.
6. Guidance is provided on making real-life connections between academic content and the local neighborhood, culture, environment, and resources.
7. Guidance is provided to help engage students' parents, caregivers, and families to enhance health lessons.

Teacher Guidance and Preparation Score

(Total number of checks)

Transfer this score to the *Teacher Guidance and Preparation* line on the *Overall Summary Form* (Chapter 3).

Notes:

Name of the Curriculum: _____			
Grade spans addressed by the curriculum (Check any that apply)			
Pre-K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12

Complete the **Instructional Strategies and Materials** score by checking the box for each criterion that applies to the curriculum under review and summing the checks. When reviewing a comprehensive health curriculum (CHE), check only when the criteria is met for most or all of the topic areas and grade spans.

Instructional Strategies and Materials—Check the box if: **Criteria Met**

1. Most or all of the instructional strategies use interactive, experiential methods that actively engage students in learning and help them personalize the information (e.g., cooperative learning, group discussions, problem solving, role playing, and skill practice).
2. Most or all of the instructional strategies, materials, and learning experiences are culturally responsive to and inclusive of the students being served.
3. Most or all of the instructional strategies, materials, and learning experiences are developmentally appropriate to meet the different learning needs of the students to be served.
4. Instructional strategies or activities are provided to expand learning opportunities outside of the classroom, such as take-home activities, investigative assignments, and field trips.

Instructional Strategies and Materials Score

(Total number of checks)

—————→

Transfer this score to the *Instructional Strategies and Materials* line on the *Overall Summary Form* (Chapter 3).

Notes:

Name of the Curriculum: _____

Grade spans addressed by the curriculum (Check any that apply)

Pre-K–2

3–5

6–8

9–12

Complete the **Teaching Health Skills**³ score by checking the box for each criterion that applies to the curriculum under review and summing the checks. When reviewing a comprehensive health curriculum (CHE), check only when the criteria is met for most or all of the topic areas and grade spans.

Teaching Health Skills—Check the box if:

Criteria Met

1. Guidance is provided for the teacher to model or demonstrate the health skills to students most or all of the time.
2. Directions are provided to help the teacher guide students' in-class skills practice most or all of the time.
3. Teaching strategies or coaching tips are provided to help the teacher guide students' independent practice of skills most or all of the time.
4. Clear criteria (in the form of rubrics, checklists, or other instruments) are provided, to help the teacher assess and provide feedback to students on their performance of health skills, most or all of the time.

Teaching Health Skills Score _____ →

(Total number of checks)

Transfer this score to the *Teaching Health Skills* line on the *Overall Summary Form* (Chapter 3).

Notes:

³ Teaching should focus on skills that enable students to build personal confidence, deal with social pressures, and avoid or reduce risk behaviors. These skills include, analyzing influences, assessing accuracy of information and services, communication, refusal, negotiation, planning and goal-setting effective decision-making, self-management and practice, and advocacy.

Name of the Curriculum: _____			
Grade spans addressed by the curriculum (Check any that apply)			
Pre-K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12

Complete the **Student Assessment** score by checking the box for each criterion that applies to the curriculum under review and summing the checks. When reviewing a comprehensive health curriculum (CHE), check only when the criteria is met for most or all of the topic areas and grade spans.

Student Assessment—Check the box if:

Criteria Met

1. A variety of student assessments, such as multiple choice, short answer, and essay tests, and performance events, tasks, and portfolios are provided to measure students' knowledge acquisition and skill performance.
2. Most or all student assessments are age- and developmentally appropriate.
3. More or all student assessments are culturally responsive and inclusive.
4. Scoring criteria, such as rubrics or scoring guides, are provided to help assess most or all of student work.
5. Opportunities for students to assess their own skill progress and concept understanding, such as personal checklists, are provided most or all of the time.

Student Assessment Score

(Total number of checks)



Transfer this score to the *Student Assessment* line on the *Overall Summary Form* (Chapter 3).

Notes:

Name of the Curriculum: _____

Grade spans addressed by the curriculum (Check any that apply)

Pre-K-2

3-5

6-8

9-12

Complete the **Promoting Healthy Norms** score by checking the box for each criterion that applies to the curriculum under review and summing the checks. When reviewing a comprehensive health curriculum (CHE), check only when the criteria is met for most or all of the topic areas and grade spans.

Promoting Healthy Norms—Check the box if:

Criteria Met

1. Opportunities for peer-to-peer activities that affirm health-promoting beliefs and behaviors, such as peer discussions, group problem solving, and peer modeling and teaching are provided.
2. Activities designed to influence the behavior of other students and family members are included, such as school-wide media campaigns and activities that encourage parents, guardians, or caregivers to practice healthy behaviors.
3. Activities designed to counter student perceptions that many of their peers engage in unhealthy or risky behaviors are provided. For example, activities are included that use youth behavior data to point out how few young people engage in an unhealthy behavior or how many engage in a healthy behavior.
4. Strategies to actively engage parents and caregivers in promoting healthy values and behaviors are included, such as student-family homework assignments that allow parents and caregivers to express their values and beliefs that support healthy behaviors and discourage risky behaviors.
5. Opportunities for students to assess their own skill progress and concept understanding, such as personal checklists, are provided most or all of the time.

Promoting Healthy Norms Score

(Total number of checks)



Transfer this score to the *Promoting Healthy Norms* line on the *Overall Summary Form* (Chapter 3).

Notes:

Name of the Curriculum: _____			
Grade spans addressed by the curriculum (Check any that apply)			
Pre-K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12

Assess this fundamental only as it applies to the review of a comprehensive health education curriculum (CHE).

A comprehensive curriculum is one that is broad in scope and content; addresses numerous health problems, issues, or topics; focuses on more than one grade span; and includes a wide range of learning activities to address multiple health outcomes.

Complete the **Continuity and Uniformity of CHE Curriculum** score by checking the box for each criterion that applies to the curriculum under review and summing the checks.

Continuity and Uniformity of CHE Curriculum—Check the box if: **Criteria Met**

1. The curriculum includes an intentional sequence and reinforcement of concepts from one grade span to the next.
2. The curriculum includes an intentional sequence and reinforcement of skills from one grade span to the next.
3. The curriculum includes multiple health topics across multiple grade spans.
4. The curriculum has consistent elements (e.g. units and lessons) and structure (e.g. format and layout).

Continuity and Uniformity of CHE Curriculum Score 

(Total number of checks)

Transfer this score to the *Continuity and Uniformity of CHE Curriculum* line on the *Overall Summary Form* (Chapter 3).

Notes: