



Background: Cooking Techniques

Procedures for the successful management of a cooking lab include:

- organizing students into lab groups
- distributing recipes
- providing ingredients
- demonstrating the skills to be learned
- establishing routines for lab maintenance and clean-up
- managing time so the recipe, assessment and clean-up are satisfactorily completed by the end of the class period.

Safety First

Follow all directions for using appliances safely. Refer to appliance manuals for kitchen equipment. Only use appliances for their intended purposes.

- Water and electricity do not mix. If an appliance falls into water, unplug it immediately.
- Never use an electrical appliance near a sink, if the cord is trailing through water, with wet hands, while standing on a wet floor or on a wet surface.
- Do not clean electrical appliances in water unless directed to do so in the owner's manual.
- Clean appliances with a clean, damp cloth, only after unplugging them.
- Inspect cords to ensure that the wires are not exposed.
- Ensure that cords are not trailing across hot surfaces or dangling over the edge of counters.



Teacher Considerations

Equipment

Demonstrate the safe use of equipment as it becomes necessary, rather than all at once.

Cooking Terms

Introduce cooking terms as they become relevant to the cooking experience, rather than as separate vocabulary unrelated to practical application.

Mise en place (pronounced meez-on-plahz)

Mise en place refers to the preparation that precedes the final assembly of ingredients. It consists of having everything in place, measured and ready, with no duplication of ingredients and no missing ingredients. Efficient mise en place speeds up product assembly and reduces the potential for bacteria growth.

Recipes

Recipes require careful reading and interpretation. Students need to understand the format and terms used in recipes.

Assessment

Encourage students to self-assess. Assessment must be constant and ongoing. An assessment of both lab management skills and product should be part of every cooking lab class. Evaluation of the product should be secondary to evaluation of the personal management and teamwork skills practised by students during production.

Lab Routines

Assign students lab maintenance and clean-up duties. Create a system to rotate duties.

Workplace Experience

At the Preparation level, the best practice is to have students experience the realities of the actual workplace. Review current policies and supporting documentation in your jurisdiction for off-campus excursions prior to any such activity.

Resources

The Career and Technology Studies (CTS) text *Food for Life* provides an excellent Canadian reference for teachers.

Basic Cooking Terms

Mixing Terms

Beat	make a mixture smooth using either a brisk over-and-over motion with a spoon or wire whisk or a rotary motion with an electric mixer
Blend	combine two or more ingredients until they are soft and smooth
Mix	combine ingredients in any way that causes a distribution
Stir	mix ingredients with a circular motion to blend them or make a uniform consistency

Cutting Terms

Chop	cut into small pieces, fine or coarse, with a sharp knife or tool
Core	cut out the centre; e.g., core an apple
Cube	cut into solid pieces with six equal sides
Dice	cut into small cubes of less than one centimetre
Flake	break a food lightly into small pieces with a fork
Grate	make into small particles by rubbing over a rough surface; e.g., a grater
Julienne	cut into silvers or strips approximately the size of matchsticks
Mince	cut into fine pieces
Pare	remove the outside covering
Slice	cut into thin, flat pieces; e.g., a slice of bread

Basic Cooking Terms: Adapted with permission (pending) from Heather Csikos, *Food Basics Module* (Calgary, AB: Home Economics Educational Supplies, 1998), pp. 23–24.

Other Techniques

Bread	coat with a substance; e.g., dry bread or cracker crumbs
Brush	coat lightly with an ingredient, e.g., fat or egg white, usually with a pastry brush
Garnish	add a small topping or decoration
Melt	change a solid to a liquid by means of heat
Season	add seasoning, often salt and pepper, to improve flavour
Strain	separate a liquid from a food, using a sieve or strainer

Cooking with Liquids

Boil	heat liquid to the point where bubbles rise and break on the surface (a rolling boil is achieved when liquid is heated to the point where it cannot be stirred down)
Scald	heat a liquid, e.g., milk, to just below boiling point
Simmer	cook a liquid just below the boiling point where bubbles form slowly and collapse below the surface
Stew	simmer food in a small amount of water

Cooking with Fats

Brown	make the surface of a food brown by frying, basting, baking or broiling
Fry	cook in a small amount of fat (cooking in a deep layer of fat is called deep-frying)
Sauté	brown or cook in a small amount of fat (French word for fry)
Stir-fry	cook chopped and sliced food quickly in hot oil while stirring (stir-fried food is sometimes thickened with cornstarch)

Oven Cooking

- Bake** cook by dry heat in an oven, in either a covered or uncovered container (meat cooked in an uncovered container is being roasted)
- Casserole** food prepared by combining and baking several ingredients

Broiling and Grilling

- Barbecue** cook food slowly over coals, under an open flame or in an electric unit, often basting it with highly seasoned sauces
- Broil** cook directly over or under intense heat
- Brown** make the surface of a food brown by broiling, frying, toasting or baking
- Marinate** let food stand in a marinade to tenderize it and develop its flavours



Lab Duties

Washer

- Sets up the sink with hot soapy water and a drying rack at the beginning of the lab.
- Washes dishes properly throughout the class.
- Cleans up the sink area until it is spotless.

Dryer

- Uses necessary linens.
- Dries the dishes thoroughly.
- Puts the dishes away in the proper storage areas.
- Checks drawers and cupboards to ensure everything is neat and in place.

Housekeeper

- Returns food to the proper storage areas.
- Cleans the counter space until it is spotless.
- Cleans the stove, oven and microwave, inside and out.
- Sweeps the floor of the kitchen and eating area.

Host

- Fills out the lab evaluation sheet and brings it to the kitchen.
- Covers the table with a vinyl cover and sets the table properly.
- Prepares the drinking pitcher.
- After the meal, shakes off and stores the place mats in a drawer or, if they are soiled, puts them in the washer.
- Wipes off, folds and stores the vinyl table cover.

General Classroom Duties Helper – Storage Area

- Fills the kitchen sugar and flour canisters from the supply bins.
- Wipes down and returns the supply bins to the storage area.
- Stores all supplies and equipment in the proper storage areas.

Selection and Use of Mixing Equipment

Recipes use many terms to describe how to combine ingredients. The following chart will help you decide which piece of mixing equipment to use.

Cooking Term	Definition	Mixing Equipment
Beat	vigorous motion to make a mixture smooth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wooden spoon • wire whisk • electric mixer • fork • spoon
Blend	combine ingredients to make a mixture smooth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wooden spoon • electric mixer • wire whisk
Cream	soften a fat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wooden spoon • electric mixer
Mix	combine ingredients in such a way that they are distributed evenly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wooden spoon • sieve (for dry ingredients)
Stir	mix ingredients using a circular motion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wooden spoon • rubber spatula
Whip	beat rapidly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wire whisk • electric mixer

Multipurpose mixing equipment, e.g., blenders, food processors, have many settings and can accomplish the above tasks.

Selection and Use of Mixing Equipment: Adapted with permission (pending) from Heather Csikos, *Food Basics Module* (Calgary, AB: Home Economics Educational Supplies, 1998), p. 27.