



Students' Perceptions About Using Nutrition-themed Activities in an English Communicative Competence Course at UANL

Jessica Mariela Rodríguez Hernández^{1*}, Diana Paola Amaro de la Paz² and Andrea Verónica Pérez Vázquez²

¹*Degree in Applied Linguistics with an Emphasis in Didactics, Doctorate in Philosophy with an Orientation in Educational Studies, Full-Time Professor at the Faculty of Public Health and Nutrition, Autonomous University of Nuevo León, Monterrey, Mexico*

²*Student of the Bachelor's Degree in Nutrition at the Faculty of Public Health and Nutrition Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, Monterrey, Mexico*

***Corresponding Author:** Jessica Mariela Rodríguez Hernández, Degree in Applied Linguistics with an Emphasis in Didactics, Doctorate in Philosophy with an Orientation in Educational Studies, Full-Time Professor at the Faculty of Public Health and Nutrition, Autonomous University of Nuevo León, Monterrey, Mexico.

Received: October 07, 2021

Published: November 12, 2021

© All rights are reserved by **Jessica Mariela Rodríguez Hernández, et al.**

Abstract

English Communicative Competence is a course at UANL aimed to develop English linguistic skills to express ideas about different topics at a lower intermediate level. Particularly, teachers from the School of Public Health and Nutrition have adopted several learning activities that will be helpful in the development of English proficiency of future health professionals since these tasks have been designed to practice the target language in a nutrition context. The purpose of this research is to describe the experience that nutrition college students had in the English Communicative Competence class, in which activities to acquire a foreign language were developed taking into account their professional field. The results showed that students were satisfied with the use of grammatical structures within contextualized situations that nutritionists usually face. They pointed out that they had acquired vocabulary and concepts related to their field of study. In conclusion, motivation and learning were present by providing students with activities that fulfilled their needs. When students practice the target language in situations close to their interests, learning a foreign language has a great possibility to become a natural process.

Keywords: English in a Nutrition Context; English for Specific Purposes; Communicative Competence; English for Future Health Professionals; Students' Perceptions

Introduction

This article presents the opinions of 41 students who had the experience of integrating nutrition subject matters as well as nutrition learning activities in their Communicative Competence course. This class is offered in the fifth semester of the nutrition

bachelor at UANL, and its purpose is to provide students with the tools and resources needed to develop linguistic skills at a lower intermediate level, so they can be able to clearly express their ideas about different areas such as family, work, school and friends. The class is scheduled once a week for 3 hours.

According to the UANL Communicative Competence syllabus, students must study several pieces of grammar and elaborate learning evidences, work on group or individual activities and do homework assignments. Some of these evidences, for instance, have to do with their daily routine, future plans or how things have changed through time. Nowadays, English has become one of the most demanded tools in the working market, that is why teachers believe that providing students with activities to develop English in a context related to what they are studying can be helpful in the acquisition of technical vocabulary and situations that they may face in their professional lives. That was the reason why teachers from this course have included in the syllabus activities related to nutrition and health fields. These learning activities have been adopted because the syllabus for this course is not elaborated by the teachers from the School of Public Health and Nutrition, but it is designed at the UANL bachelor's degree department. This means that all the teachers who teach Communicative Competence at UANL should follow that syllabus. Due to this fact, teachers in this school have added activities and tasks related to the context of the students' career without sacrificing the pieces of grammar included in the official syllabus.

The syllabus for nutrition students includes the following themes:

- Simple present
- Simple past
- Future (will and be going to)
- Simple sentences
- Conjunctions and & or
- Compound sentences
- Run-ons and comma splices
- Types of paragraphs
- Paragraph structure
- Present perfect
- Past perfect
- Modals

- Second conditional
- Third conditional
- Tips for a public speaking.

Therefore, the Communicative Competence course is more likely to be a kind of English course. It is important to say that the students' level of English at the School of Public Health and Nutrition varies, but according to previous TOEFL practices given in the last two years, the average level is A2 based on the table of equivalence of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The approach adopted in this course is known as English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It aims to develop English communication skills in a specific area or professional field, in so doing, students will meet the need of the labor market [1]. Historically, ESP was a movement in language teaching that started in the 1960s. Dudley Evans and St John [2] view this approach as a discipline in which the methodologies used as well as the materials provided are centered on the context of a specific population of students.

An ESP teacher integrates both subject matter and English language. It is believed that this combination increases students' motivation because they are able to apply and use the target language in their main field of study, in this case, in the area of nutrition. Xhaferi [3] says that being able to use the vocabulary and structures that people learn in a meaningful context reinforces what is taught and increases their motivation. However, ESP concentrates more on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structures.

ESP teachers are facilitators. They provide students with language strategies to make learning happens. Teachers under this approach are not supposed to be knowledge providers but to give students the tools to "expand their conceptual understanding and apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations" [4].

It is important to highlight that as a foreign language teaching, planning and delivering an ESP class is not that easy. Usually, language teachers do not have a background on the students' field. For this reason, they prefer to select or design activities where students can get familiar with new technical vocabulary or advise people on how to eat well in order to perform optimally at work, at school and at home rather than teaching students how many grams

of protein each person needs, how to calculate the body mass index or how to customize a diet for a diabetic patient. In these cases, a language teacher would have to be trained or supported by a nutritionist.

The purpose of this research is to explore the students' perceptions about the experience they had integrating language and content in a foreign language class. In this way, teachers will verify whether the decision they made about adapting nutrition-themed activities in the Communicative Competence Course has brought

positive results in learning and motivation.

Besides studying the themes included in the syllabus, teachers have designed activities where students can practice English in a context they feel familiar with. In this section some samples will be displayed just as students did them with no edition. One of the activities is named the 24-hour food intake recall. In this activity students have to use verbs in simple past. The 24-hour food intake of one of the students is shown below (names of brands were omitted).

Breakfast	Snack 1	Lunch	Snack 2	Dinner
7:00 am Yesterday I woke up and the first thing I drank was a glass of water. 10:00 am I always eat my breakfast at school. I ate an almond butter sandwich, which was absolutely delicious, and I drank a protein shake with cinnamon.	12:30 pm I was going to eat a small portion of cranberries, but I forgot them at home, so I just drank a bottle of water. I also chewed minty bubble-gum. It was a sad meal, because I forgot my cranberries.	3:30 pm I remember that my mom made an incredible dish. She prepared chicken breasts stuffed with spinach and cream cheese. We also ate rice, but not the typical rice, it was cauliflower rice. DELICIOUS! For this meal I drank lemonade, I was going to drink water, but I wanted to drink something sweet, that's why I chose lemonade.	6:00 pm This is my favorite meal of the day because I can choose between a sugar free chocolate and a little bag of pork rinds or as we call them in Mexico "chicharrones". It was obvious that I chose choose the sugar free chocolate.	9:30 pm For this meal I ate scrambled eggs with chorizo, cheese, a little bit of chili, tomato and onion. We were going to eat pizza, but we chose the healthiest option. As always, I drank a glass of water with my dinner.

Table a

When students learn about how to structure a paragraph, they have to write about what a nutritionist does. The length of the paragraph must range between 150-200 words. The paragraph must show a topic sentence, supporting ideas and a concluding sentence. Students usually write about the different duties of a nutritionist or where they can work. Below, the original paragraph of the in the Communicative Competence course is shown.

A Nutritionist for a lifestyle

For a healthy life you need a nutritionist. Why? Because they studied for five years or more to learn how to do individual menus for every type of person, no matter age, gender, or health status. To do menus, they need to know about their patient, and the best

way of knowing that is by determining their body composition, the amount of fat or muscle every patient has, this is helpful for nutritionist because they can give a diagnosis about their patient's health, and the treatment (menu) they are going to give to the patient. Another activity that they can do is to supervise the service given in different food services, like restaurants, or coffee shops. Last but not least, they can do a master about sports nutrition, so they can give advice to athletes. In conclusion, nutritionist are really helpful human beings because they have the ability of changing people's life by giving them a better life quality.

Moreover, there is an activity where students must write a brief job interview for a nutritionist. Here a sample of one of the teams.

I: Interviewer

C: Candidate

I: Hello, good morning Mariana, how are you? C: Good Morning; Fine, thanks!

I: All right, let's start with the interview. How did you find out about this job?

C: Well, a friend who is also a nutritionist told me that there were vacancies in this clinic and I was interested to see that it was a very good opportunity.

I: Oh, very good. In what area of nutrition would you like to develop?

C: I really like the clinical area, because I am passionate about helping people change their lifestyle to a healthier one and improve their quality of life I: Have you worked in any clinic of this type?

C: Well, in my school, I was an intern in the nutrition clinic and I found out that this is what I like, although I do not discard being in another area.

I: Excellent... Tell me, how much do you expect to earn in this job?

C: Well, I think that what the ad shows is a good salary, because, in many places they do not value us as professionals but I would like to get promoted and at some point I could get a better salary.

I: Well, reviewing your resume and this interview, I think you're an excellent candidate for the position, what do you think if we see you on Monday at 8:00 a.m here to start your training and know everything about the clinic and you can start as soon as possible.

C: Of course, I will be here. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

I: Have an excellent day, and I see you here on time at the time we agreed.

One of the most important tasks in the course is the final integrated project which is an appointment with the nutritionist. Students make up a conversation between a nutritionist and a patient and once they have received feedback from the teacher, they must

act it out. In these activities students use modals which are studied within the course. Some extracts of students' works are shown below (they were not edited).

Sample 1

- **Nutritionist:** Let me ask you more questions, could you follow the plan?
- **Patient:** From Monday to Friday I did it perfectly, on weekends not so much.
- **Nutritionist:** It is important to be constant, if you want to see more results you must follow the diet to the letter.
- **Patient:** Okay nutritionist.
- **Nutritionist:** Anyway, it seems very good to me that most of the time you have done it. Patient: Thanks.

Sample 2

- **Nutritionist:** Ok, now we are finished, with the information you gave me, in a moment I will be able to give you your food plan and you will have to follow the plan for a month.
- **Patient:** Very well, I'll be back in a few minutes.
- **Nutritionist:** Your plan is done. Now, you will have to be very responsible following the plan, and you will come back with me in a month.

Sample 3

- **Nutritionist:** Oh don't worry, I'll explain to you everything you need. What meal don't you know how to prepare?
- **Mom:** Well, more than anything the sea food, such as salmon and fish. The truth is that no one in the family eats seafood or anything like that, so it would be the first time I have cooked this type of food.
- **Nutritionist:** Bake the salmon for 15-20 minutes depending on the thickness of the fish, until it is cooked and served immediately. As for the fish is better prepared on the grill, it is healthier and conserves its nutrients.
- **Mom:** And for the other preparations, any recommendations that should be followed?

- **Nutritionist:** Only, try to measure everything that will serve your daughter, you can cook the same food for your whole family, but your daughter only serves the amount that comes in the menu and try to use the minimum oil if you have to fry some food. If there are no more questions, I will see you in two weeks, and like I said, for the next visit I will need a blood test.

At the end of the semester, as part of the integrated final project they have to give a brief speech about a topic related to nutrition or health. For this last activity, before giving their speech, they must develop an outline (as a guide) and do research about the chosen topic. Here a sample of one of the original outlines.

Millennial nutrition

Introduction

Greeting:

Good morning everyone.

Quote, question or statement:

Have you ever heard the word millennial? What relationship has nutrition with this word?

Interesting information to get the audience's attention

Nowadays being "fit" has become very popular around the new generations, including different and new types of meals, but often they do not have enough trusty information about these new lifestyles and eating habits and end up damaging their health.

Student's introduction, theme's introduction:

My name is _____ and I'm going to talk about the millennial nutrition.

Development

First main idea:

Different definition about the new popular lifestyles.

Second main idea:

Consequences that the person can have.

Third main idea:

Other new trends.

Conclusion

Conclusion marker:

To conclude.

Summary, opinion or suggestion:

It is important that if we want to acquire a new lifestyle along with new eating habits, we must have the correct information and go to a health specialist, to receive guidance and advice, also having recurring appointments with the doctor to evaluate that your new habits are not damaging your health.

Acknowledge and farewell

Thank you very much for your attention.

It is very important to stand out that in addition to the previous presented activities about health and nutrition where students developed linguistic skills in English, the students in this class also studied a few chapters about nutrition content. They were assigned three chapters of the book titled American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide. By doing this, some teams were responsible of explaining the chapters from this book while other teams were in charge of presenting and reviewing the pieces of grammar included in the official syllabus. All the teams, either responsible of explaining grammar or content, had to design an activity to review and assess students' learning at the end of their presentations. The chapters studied were the following:

- Your healthy weight: the key to wellness
- Fluids: water and more
- Meals and snacks

Students were given three nutrition quizzes in the whole semester (besides their English partial exams). On the one hand, these quizzes were an instrument to diagnose students' knowledge of basic concepts about nutrition, but on the other hand, and what really mattered for the purpose of the project, it was a tool to measure how much nutrition key vocabulary they knew or were familiar with. For the final grade, the quizzes were worth only two points out of 100 because it was the first time in the course that

students were going to work with content in an English class (See Annexes 1, 2 and 3).

Methods

This research presents an exploratory and qualitative study to describe the students' perceptions about learning after having studied the English Communicative Competence course based on an English for Specific Purposes approach. At the end of the course, a Likert scale questionnaire was given to 41 participants in this study. The purpose of this qualitative study was to get information from the students, so feedback about the experience of integrating vocabulary and activities related to nutrition in their English Communicative Competence class would be collected to make decisions about the adaptation of learning evidences for the syllabus.

The paper-based instrument showed 23 questions (See Annex 4). Four of the questions were open ended, and students could write comments, give their opinion or make suggestions about the syllabus. Once students completed the questionnaire, the data was processed in an Excel sheet, and the open-ended questions were analyzed by categories.

Questions were aimed to find out how students felt in an English class where nutrition concepts and themes were studied, Also, it was important to identify the students' opinions about a foreign language class with activities designed within a nutrition context such as a dialogue between a patient and a nutritionist. Moreover, some other questions attempted to discover to what extent the different activities carried out (either to develop language or content) contributed to their career as future nutritionists. Furthermore, there were a few more questions about how much students had increased their nutrition vocabulary, the chances they had to practice English orally, the importance of English, the roles of the teacher and students in a class like this one, ideas about basic nutrition topics to study in an English class, recommendations for learning evidences or activities about nutrition in a foreign language, the development of the linguistic skills through the activities provided and the characteristics of an ideal English class among other questions. All this data will be presented in the following section.

Results and Discussion

In the first part of the questionnaire, students were asked about the relevance of the topics studied in the semester from the Ameri-

can Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide. The results are presented in table 1.

Topic	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important
Healthy weight	82.90%	17.10%	0%
Fluids	48.80%	43.90%	7.30%
Food and snacks	83.00%	17.00%	0%

Table 1: Importance of nutrition and health topics.

Several activities with different objectives were done in the classroom, and students evaluated, by means of the instrument, how much these activities contributed to their education as future nutritionists. The results are showed in table 2.

Activity	Contribution to the professional field (The percentage shows the results got in the high level of contribution)
TOEFL	87.80%
24-hour food intake recall	80.40%
Nutritionist and patient conversation at a medical appointment	78.00%
Partial exams	75.60%
Team presentation about grammar structures	68.20%
Writing a paragraph about the importance of a nutritionist	65.80%
Oral speech about a health or nutrition topic	63.40%
Modals chart	56.00%
Communicative activities	56.00%
Nutrition quizzes based on chapters from American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide	56.00%
Exercises in the booklet	43.90%
Writing your daily routine	43.90%
Songs	21.90%
Play	14.60%

Table 2: Classroom activities and their contribution as future nutritionists.

According to table 2, TOEFL had the highest percentage, which means that students believe that this test contributes to a great extent in their career as future nutritionists. A TOEFL practice was given at the end of the Communicative Competence course, but this is not included in the official syllabus, it is just an instrument to let the students know what their level of proficiency is. The activities related to nutrition got a higher percentage than the regular activities of the Communicative Competence course.

Students were also asked to what extent the learning activities and integrated final project were related to themes about nutrition. According to 46.30%, they said that the assignments developed in class were moderately related to their field while 43.90% stated that indeed the learning tasks were closely related to nutrition.

Moreover, students gave their opinion about the relevance of working with activities to review grammar structures as well as nutrition themes at the same time. For example, when working with simple past, they were told to elaborate a chart with a 24-hour food intake recall using verbs in simple past such as ate, had, tried, and drank, among others. The results showed that 56.10% think that it is highly important to practice the pieces of grammar in a nutritional context. On the other hand, 39.00% believe that it is moderately relevant to do so, and 4.90% said that it was slightly important.

Students were questioned about how useful the Communicative Competence course was for their career as a nutritionist. It was found that 51.20% believed that what was done in class was moderately useful, 41.50% felt that the activities developed were very helpful for them as future nutritionists, and 7.30% stated that the activities were of little use in their lives as nutritionists.

Students reported to what extent they had learned new vocabulary in a nutritional context. According to the results, 73.20% perceived that they had learned new vocabulary in a moderate way, 14.60% mentioned that they had learned a lot of vocabulary, 9.80% said that they had acquired just a few new words, and 2.40% mentioned that they had not learned any vocabulary at all.

In regard to the acquisition of language skills in the Communicative Competence class, students perceived that listening, speaking, reading and writing had been mainly developed in a moderate way. The results are shown in table 3.

Language skills	Highly developed	Moderately developed	Weakly developed	Underdeveloped
Listening	26.80%	53.70%	14.60%	4.90%
Speaking	26.80%	48.80%	24.40%	0.00%
Reading	34.10%	39.00%	26.80%	0.00%
Writing	26.80%	48.80%	24.40%	0.00%

Table 3: Perception of language skills development.

Having a multilevel class was a fact in this experience. For this reason, students were asked about their level of achievement in class. According to their perception, 58.50% mentioned that their level of achievement was moderate, 31.70% said that they had a high level of achievement, and 9.80% believed that their level of achievement was low.

One of the benefits of the course was the improvement of English. Based on the results, 53.70% expressed that their English improved in a moderate way, 14.60% believed that their English was much better at the end of the semester than before, 17.10% felt that they had not had any progress in English because their level was so basic, and 14.60% said that their level of English was advanced and for this reason they felt that their English level remained the same before and after doing the course.

Students were asked about the teacher's role. More than a half, 65.80%, think that both the teacher and students should be responsible of presenting and explaining the new information. It is important to highlight that 29.30% pointed out that the teacher had to be the one who explained the lesson. A few students, 4.90%, said that students should be the ones in charge of explaining, but the teacher had to take the role of a facilitator.

There was a question about what would make an ideal English class for future health professionals. Once again, more than a half, 65.80%, mentioned that it would be best if the Communicative Competence class focused on daily life situations as well as nutrition and health issues. However, 29.30% stated that their ideal English class would be a class focused only on daily life communication, and 4.90% would prefer a class based on American and English culture.

Students expressed their opinions concerning the use of English from the teacher. It was found that 63.40% believe that Eng-

lish must be spoken 90% of the class, and clarification of doubts should be done in Spanish. Moreover, 17.10% mentioned that the teacher should use English the whole class. It is important to say that 19.50% prefer a class where both languages English and Spanish could be spoken 50% of the time.

The course aimed to be a theoretical-practical one, and it was clear for students since 90.30% of them agreed with this fact. For some others, 7.30%, the course was practical, and a few of them, 2.40%, said that it was theoretical.

With regards to opportunities given to students to interact orally and practice English in the classroom, 46.30% stated that they were given a lot of opportunities to use the target language communicatively, 31.70% said that the opportunities to interact orally were moderate, and 22.00% believed the chances to practice English were not enough.

Another point to discuss was the importance of English in their future lives. A large percentage of students, 85.40% pointed out that being fluent in English was very important in their lives. Some others, 12.20%, stated that English was moderately important, and just a 2.40% said it was not important for them as future nutritionists.

When we asked students their opinion about learning nutrition content in the Communicative Competence course, all of them made positive comments. They expressed that learning about their field was something important, good, excellent, interesting, useful and needed. However, there were some suggestions about the teaching method. The chapters from the American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide were randomly assigned to a few teams, and some of the members were limited English proficient students. Therefore, students think the presentations should have been done by either the teacher or students who mastered English. Moreover, a few of them expressed that this teaching method was effective only when students knew English. Otherwise, it was difficult for some of them to understand the explanation of the classmates in front of the class. Many of them expressed that the fact of working with content in English was of great help to acquire vocabulary and concepts of their field. Others believed that this approach could increase the possibilities of getting a better job since they got better at English. Some others agreed with the fact that learning about nutrition content was helpful to understand

and comprehend health and nutrition articles, books and guides in English. Finally, one of the students said that this project was a good way to meet internationalization goals.

The questionnaire given to students had this hypothetical question: If you had enough time, and the school offered an affordable and extracurricular course to reinforce vocabulary related to nutrition as well as topics about health and nutrition, would you take it? The results showed that 92.70% would do this extracurricular class, while 7.30% said they would not.

It is important to point out that when students were asked about the impact of a subject matter in English, 70.70% said that their education would improve if they could do a content course in English different from the one of Communicative Competence. The rest of the students, 22.00%, said that the impact would be moderate and 7.30% think that doing a content course in English will not make a big positive change in their education.

When students were asked about tips or suggestions to improve the performance of the teams that presented the content from the American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, most of them stated that the teacher's feedback would be a good way to better understand the concepts. Since the students were responsible of presenting the themes, they said that the teacher's comments could have enriched what the students had explained. Also, they said that the presentations must be assigned to students fluent in English. Otherwise, mispronunciation and lack of proficiency can make the class boring and confusing. They think that rehearsing at home should be a must, so the speech in front of the class will result in a good and clear use of English. In addition to these comments, they pointed out that in order to make learning happen, the team presentations should be more concise, shorter, and more attractive with plenty of images, lots of examples of real situations, relevant information and emphasis on key words.

As it was previously mentioned, some teams were assigned pieces of grammar to do their presentations in front of the group while others were assigned content from the American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide. Therefore, only the teams in charge of presenting information from this guide had the chapters to read at home. For this reason, students claimed that everyone must have the material, so they could take a look at the chapters before and after class. A few of them considered that

Spanish should be allowed at a time while the explanation is taking place, in order to help students whose English is limited. Moreover, students showed disagreement with the way some teams developed their presentation. They think that a dynamic class is more meaningful than a class where the information is just read rather than explained.

According to the students' preferences, the following are the top five courses they consider would be good to teach in English at the School of Public Health and Nutrition:

- Dietetics
- Biochemistry
- Lifecycle nutrition
- Obesity
- Anatomy

In addition to the desired courses to be taught in English, students were also asked about the basic nutrition themes to be studied in a foreign language class (English) or in the Communicative Competence course. They came up with a wide variety of themes, which are listed below.

- Illnesses and diseases
- Nutrition in university students
- Human anatomy
- Meal times
- Healthy weight
- Preventive nutrition
- Macronutrients and micronutrients
- Meal plans
- Nutrition care process
- Body mass index
- Obesity and overweight
- Basic nutrition principles
- Metabolism
- Tools for nutritional assessment

- Anthropometry
- Types of diets
- Research
- Nutrition in Mexico
- Lifecycle nutrition
- Gastronomy
- Food guidance
- Healthy food and drinks
- Digestive system
- Sports nutrition
- Nutritional epidemiology
- Weekly dietary recall
- Alternative therapies
- Malnutrition
- Community nutrition
- Nutritional intervention
- Bromatology
- Food serving sizes
- Benefits of exercise (genetics and molecular levels)

Lastly, students proposed different new learning activities related to nutrition, which can be applied in the Communicative Competence course. They consider these tasks very important in their training as professional nutritionists.

- Elaborating meals plans
- Studying clinical cases
- Reviewing vocabulary about nutrition and sports
- Playing games about nutrition
- Practicing anthropometric measurements
- Elaborating surveys to identify family nutrition levels
- Interviewing a real nutritionist

- Writing essays about diseases
- Working on dietetics calculus
- Reading articles about nutrition
- Making diets
- Writing summaries
- Quizzes
- Creating menus
- Developing cooking practices
- Watching videos about themes related to nutrition
- Elaborating brochures about nutrition
- Elaborating a healthy product to describe its benefits and combination with other foods

Conclusion

This work presented the students' perceptions about having a Communicative Competence course where some of the learning evidences and classroom activities were designed based on what a nutritionist may face as a health professional.

It is a fact that according to the information analyzed, many students (85.40%) regard English as a highly important tool in their lives. Therefore, the experience of adopting health and nutrition-themed activities in the Communicative Competence class ended up as satisfying for students. This teaching approach is known as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), since the materials and learning tasks provided are centered on the context of a specific population of students. With an increasing number of majors in universities, ESP courses are becoming crucial to meet the students' needs as well as social demands. Nevertheless, due to the lack of professional training, ESP teachers may face challenges to develop language in the context of a specialized area or field they are not familiar with, that is, why the teacher is a facilitator of learning rather than a subject matter expert.

Even though students' opinions were positive in most of the cases, they also provided feedback to make this approach more effective, and they proposed some topics and learning activities related to their field in order to include them in the syllabus of the course. In this way, providing students with activities close to their

needs will contribute to a meaningful and long-life learning. It has been proven that when students are exposed to real life situations, then learning takes place. As a result, learning about nutrition by using English and acquiring English in a contextualized environment were the main goals to meet in the course. For this reason, English teachers at the School of Public Health and Nutrition are very concerned with giving students enough opportunities to practice the target language in situations close to their interests to enhance motivation. By so doing, learning a foreign language has a great possibility to become a natural process.

Annex 1

First nutrition quiz

Name: _____

I. Underline the correct answer.

YOUR HEALTHY WEIGHT: KEY TO WELLNESS

1. In the United States, _____ has become epidemic, with the incidences doubling and in some cases tripling over the past four decades.

- a) Pregnancy
- b) Diet
- c) Obesity

2. It's the weight that is best for you.

- a) Underweight
- b) Healthy weight
- c) Ideal weight

3. It is a measure of body weight in relation to height, which is considered a reasonable reliable indicator of total body fat.

- a) Blood pressure
- b) Glucose level
- c) Body mass index

4. It refers to energy in food and the energy the body uses.

- a) Calories
- b) Fat
- c) Carbohydrates

5. _____. Consume fewer calories than you burn each day. Either cut back on calories in, or move more. Better yet, do both. a) For weight gain

- b) For weight loss
- c) For weight control

FLUIDS, WATER AND MORE

6. This clear, refreshing fluid is one of your body's most essential nutrients. a) Blood

- b) Sweat
- c) Water

7. On average body weight is _____

- a) 45 to 75% water.
- b) 30 to 60% water.
- c) 60 to 80% water.

8. Your blood is about _____

- a) 75% water.
- b) 83% water.
- c) 90% water.

9. Body fat is about _____

- a) 15% water.
- b) 40% water.
- c) 25% water.

10. Even though bones seem hard, they contain _____

- a) 22% water by weight.
- b) 30% water by weight.
- c) 10% water by weight.

Meals and snacks

11. Most people acknowledge that eating _____ is the healthful way to start the day.

- a) snacks
- b) breakfast
- c) brunch

12. It is a great way to fit calcium and vitamin D into your day.

- a) Cereal with milk or yogurt
- b) Ham and cheese
- c) Potato salad

13. It may affect learning significantly by reducing concentration, problem-solving, and muscle coordination. a) Tiredness

- b) Thirst
- c) Morning hunger

14. They can supply foods and nutrients that often come up short during the day. a) Cakes

- b) Chocolates
- c) Snacks

15. Which of the following statements is a myth?

- a) Snacks are fattening.
- b) Frequent snacking can promote cavities.
- c) With their high-energy needs and small stomachs, most children need snacks.

Annex 2

Second nutrition quiz

Name: _____

I. Underline the correct answer.

YOUR HEALTHY WEIGHT: KEY TO WELLNESS

1. In scientific terms, _____ is the energy level that keeps involuntary body processes going: pumping your heart, breathing, generating body heat, perspiring, transmitting brain messages, and producing thousands of body chemicals.

- a) Basal metabolic rate
- b) Body mass index
- c) Glucose level

2. It is a powerful tool for weight management.

- a) Diets
- b) Physical activity
- c) Sleep

3. It is sometimes called the starvation sickness.

- a) Anorexia nervosa
- b) Bulimia
- c) Binge eating disorder

4. It is marked by purging (self-induced vomiting).

- a) Anorexia nervosa
- b) Bulimia
- c) Binge eating disorder

5. It is the uncontrollable eating of large amounts of food in a short time.

- a) Anorexia nervosa
- b) Bulimia

- c) Binge eating disorder

FLUIDS WATER AND MORE

6. This physical sensation signals that your body needs more fluid to perform its many functions.

- a) Thirst
- b) Hunger
- c) Sleep

7. What does water regulate?

- a) Body temperature
- b) Glucose levels
- c) Breathing

8. By softening stools, water helps...

- a) prevent constipation
- b) prevent weight gain
- c) prevent pregnancy

9. These vegetables contain more than 90% water.

- a) Celery, lettuce and tomatoes
- b) Zucchini, carrots and lettuce
- c) Lettuce, onion and nopal

10. According to the Institute of Medicine (IOM), how much water do females nineteen and over need daily?

- a) 2 liters
- b) 2.5 liters
- c) 2.7 liters

Meals and snacks

11. It refers to eating small portions of food in place of regular meals.

- a) Grazing
- b) Fasting
- c) Snacking

12. Breakfast is your body's early morning refueling stop. After 8 to 12 hours without a meal or a snack, your body needs to replenish its _____ with food.

- a) Insulin
- b) Blood
- c) Glucose

13. How does breakfast help to learn?

- a) It may be linked to better memory, grades and test scores, school attendance, mood and psychosocial behavior.
- b) It provides a jump start for fitting enough fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and calciumrich dairy foods into your day.
- c) It may offer benefits for heart health, digestion, and bone health.

14. If you feel sleepy in the afternoon,

- a) a 10-to-20-minute nap might be enough to revive you.
- b) have a snack to wake up.
- c) read an interesting book to forget about a nap.

15. How often can you make seafood the protein food on your plate?

- a) Twice a week
- b) Three times a week
- c) Once a week

Annex 3

Third nutrition quiz

Name: _____

I. Underline the correct answer.

YOUR HEALTHY WEIGHT: KEY TO WELLNESS

1. It is key to calorie balance, weight management, and many more health benefits. a) A diet

- b) An active lifestyle
- c) Family and friends

2. It lists the calories in a single serving.

- a) The chef
- b) Nutrition facts on the food label
- c) The recipe book

3. It is one of the reasons why people lose their appetite.

- a) They fall in love
- b) Disease
- c) To look thinner

4. It deprives the body of energy and nutrients needed for normal functions.

- a) Popular diets
- b) Fasting
- c) Snacks

5. It is simply normal body fat under the skin that looks lumpy when the fat layer gets thick.

- a) Cellulite
- b) Acne
- c) Varicose veins

Fluids: water and more

6. How many cups of fluids a day, along with food, is generally enough to replace the fluids you lose?

- a) More than 10 cups
 - b) More than 9 cups
 - c) More than 8 cups
7. They cause increased water loss.
- a) High-fiber diets
 - b) Fever, diarrhea and vomiting
 - c) Pregnancy and breastfeeding
8. It is the most available fluid around and often your best choice to drink.
- a) Mineral water
 - b) Plain water
 - c) Spring water
9. It is simply flavored water, perhaps fortified with vitamin C or other nutrients, or herbs.
- a) Fruit juice
 - b) Juice drink
 - c) Fruit drink
10. When it comes to terminology, only 100 percent juice can be called "juice".
- a) Fruit juice
 - b) Juice drink
 - c) Fruit drink
11. If juice is diluted (<100 percent juice), the product label must identify it with a different name.
- a) Fruit juice
 - b) Juice drink
 - c) Fruit drink

- Meals and snacks
12. What are some reasons people give for breakfast skipping or skimping?
- a) Sick, empty fridge, fasting
 - b) No time, woke up late, on a diet
 - c) Feel nervous, stress, can't cook
13. It may also help you eat less as you pay attention to satiety cues.
- a) Eating slower
 - b) Eating faster
 - c) Eating healthier
14. What is a fact about snacking?
- a) Snack foods aren't good for you
 - b) Snacks spoil your appetite
 - c) Any food can be a snack
15. Try to choose fruits and vegetables with a variety of colors. Vary the textures, too!
- a) ½ - ¼ - ¼ Test
 - b) Whole Test
 - c) Color-Crunch Test

Annex 4

The following questionnaire aims to feed back the communicative competence learning unit in English so that students obtain a better use for their university education.

1. To what degree do you think the following topics will be helpful in your career as a nutritionist? Mark with a cross.

Topics	1 High	2 Moderate	3 Little	4 Null
a) Healthy weight				
b) Fluids				
(c) Food and snacks				

2. Evaluate the degree of contribution of the following activities in your education as a future nutritionist.

Activities	1 High	2 Moderate	3 Little	4 Null	5 I didn't do it
a) Daily routine					
b) Reminder of food intake in the last 24 hours					
c) Table with modal verbs					
d) Paragraph on what a nutritionist does (respecting the structure of a paragraph)					
e) Consultation between a patient and a nutritionist					
f) Oral speech (outlining of a speech)					
g) Songs					
h) Booklet with grammar exercises					
i) Communicative activities in class (future predictions, find someone who, advice for problem solving, when was the last time that)					
j) Play (dialogues with characters)					
k) Nutrition quizzes					
(l) Partial exams					
m) Team class presentation					
n) TOEFL (test to know the degree of English proficiency)					

3. To what extent do you consider that the learning activities carried out in the course as well as the elaboration of the final project were related to nutrition topics?
 - b) Moderate
 - c) Little
 - d) Null

4. To what extent do you think that combining English learning activities to practice grammatical structures and nutrition based activities is useful for the purpose of the class? For example, instead of describing your daily routine, it would be better to talk about the challenges of a nutritionists, or instead of filling out a chart with modal verbs and their language functions, why not writing down some suggestions to have a healthy lifestyle.
 - a) High
 - b) Moderate
 - c) Little
 - d) Null

5. To what degree do you think that the activities related to nutritional themes in this course will be useful?
 - a) High
 - b) Moderate
 - c) Little
 - d) Null

6. To what extent did you increase your vocabulary related to nutrition themes?
 - a) High
 - b) Moderate
 - c) Little
 - d) Null

7. To what degree do you think that the following language skills were developed or reinforced in this course?

Language skills	1 High	2 Moderate	3 Little	4 Null
a) Listening				
b) Speaking				
c) Reading				
d) Writing				

8. Based on the fact that this class is a multilevel one, that is, the proficiency of English among the students varies, what do you consider to be your level of achievement in the semester?

- a) High
- b) Moderate
- c) Little
- d) Null

9. To what extent do you think that your level of English improved with this course?

- a) A lot
- b) Moderately
- c) Little because my level of English is advanced, and I already knew what was studied in the course.
- d) Little because my aptitude for English is low.
- e) Nothing because I knew everything that was studied.
- f) Nothing because I feel that English is not for me.
- g) Little because my level of English is advanced and what was studied I already knew
- h) Little because my aptitude for English is low
- i) Nothing because I master everything that was studied
- j) Nothing because I feel that English is not for me

10. In your opinion and taking into account the teacher and student roles, what do you think would be an ideal class?

- a) One where the teacher was in charge of the class .
- b) One where both teacher and students presented the themes
- c) One where the students were in charge of presenting the contents of the class, but the teacher was there as a facilitator when needed

11. In your opinion as a future health professional, what would make an ideal communicative competence class?

- a) Learning about how to use English in the everyday life.
- b) Learning about both how to use English in the everyday life and in the context of nutrition.
- c) Learning about American and British culture (customs, traditions, idiomatic expressions, typical dishes, monuments, etc.)
- d) All of the above.

12. What is your opinion about the teacher's use of English in the classroom?

- a) The teacher must speak English 100% of the time.
- b) The teacher must speak English 90% of the time and use 10% to clarify doubts or only when necessary
- c) The teacher must speak English 50% of the class and the mother tongue the other 50%.
- d) The teacher must speak the student's mother tongue as much as he can.

13. For you, this course was based on...High

- a) Theory
- b) Practice
- c) Theory and practice.

14. To what degree did you have the opportunity to practice English in class?
- a) High
 - b) Moderate
 - c) Little
 - d) Null
15. How important is English for your future?
- a) Very important
 - b) Moderately important
 - c) Low importance
 - d) Not important
16. What do you think about the idea of integrating nutrition-related content in a communicative competence English class?
17. If there were a two-hour extracurricular class per week for free or with an affordable option to reinforce technical vocabulary, that is, vocabulary related to nutrition topics, would you take it if it fitted your schedule?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
18. To what extent do you think your education as a future nutritionist can improve with a nutrition content class in English?
- a) High
 - b) Moderate
 - c) Little
 - d) Null
19. What do you suggest to make the nutrition content-based team presentations more attractive and with a meaningful learning?
20. What courses of your nutrition career would you like to do in English?
21. Mention at least three basic nutrition themes that you think that can be studied in an English class.
22. Mention at least three learning activities related to nutrition that can be included in the communicative competence English class. Activities that you think can be included because they would have a greater impact on your education as a nutritionist.
23. Write some additional comments.
- Thank you very much.

Bibliography

1. What are English for Specific Purposes courses?. Wits Language School. Johannesburg: South Africa (2018).
2. Dudley T and St. John M. "Developments in English for specific purposes: A multidisciplinary approach". Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1998).
3. Xhaferi B. "Teaching and Learning ESP Vocabulary". *Biblid* (2010): 229-255.
4. Pham L. "Differentiated instruction and the need to integrate teaching and practice". *Journal of College Teaching and Learning* 9.1 (2012): 13-20.

Volume 5 Issue 12 December 2021

© All rights are reserved by Jessica Mariela Rodríguez Hernández, *et al.*