

# CHAPTER 8

## Teaching English for Nutritionist

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The role of nutritionists in Indonesia has shifted from a clinical support function to a strategic national priority following the massive implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal or *Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG)* program. This government initiative aims to combat stunting and improve human capital, which has triggered a surge in demand for qualified nutrition graduates to manage dietary planning and quality control. However, the success of this program depends on the quality rather than just the quantity of human resources. In this context, proficiency in English for Specific Purposes emerges as a fundamental instrument. It allows practitioners to access global nutritional standards and interventions based on strong evidence that are required to execute the MBG program effectively (Baker, 2015; Rahmawati, 2026).

Despite the urgency of this national agenda, a critical gap persists regarding the vocational readiness of Indonesian nutrition graduates. While the local curriculum covers domestic regulations, the scientific foundation for high quality mass nutrition is predominantly documented in English. This includes complex protocols like Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and the latest guidelines on micronutrient fortification from the WHO. Without adequate ESP competence, graduates risk becoming merely administrative implementers rather than scientific practitioners capable of innovating in the field. This linguistic barrier limits their ability to adopt best

practices from other countries that have successfully managed school lunch programs, such as Japan, Finland, Scotland or India and ultimately stagnates the potential quality of Indonesia's initiatives (Rahmawati, 2026).

Therefore, integrating a robust ESP curriculum into Indonesian nutrition programs is an immediate necessity to elevate the competency of future graduates. The focus must shift from general English to specific competencies relevant to the MBG ecosystem, such as comprehending international dietary journals, interpreting imported food labeling, and understanding global public health reports (Halimatussakdiah & Munazar, 2021). By bridging the gap between local operational needs and global scientific knowledge through language, higher education institutions can produce globally oriented local practitioners (Hasbi, 2025). These graduates will be better equipped to ensure that the free nutritious meal program is not just a logistical operation but a scientifically grounded intervention that meets international standards of health and safety (Stotzer & Farkas, 2024).

## **2. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN**

### **2.1 Course Objective and Content**

The course syllabus is structured comprehensively over sixteen weeks (one semester) to ensure a gradual and logical progression of skills. The first five meetings focus on building a strong linguistic foundation, starting with parts of speech in week one, followed by tenses and vocabulary in weeks two and three, and concluding with academic phrases in weeks four and five. Meetings six and seven shift the focus to listening comprehension using materials relevant to nutritional science, curated from trusted sources like the *British Council*, *Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab*, and *BBC Learning English*. A midterm examination is held in week eight to evaluate the students' grasp of the material covered in the first half of the semester.

Following the midterm, weeks nine through eleven are dedicated to reading skills, utilizing academic texts and scientific journals. I also incorporate current news from *The New York Times* to ensure the content remains up-to-date and relatable to the students' lives. The speaking component begins in week twelve, where I introduce

presentation techniques ranging from preparation to closing statements. Students are then asked to present the articles they analyzed in meeting five, followed by a Q&A session to refine their communicative abilities. In week thirteen, the focus turns to dialogue construction using specific English terminology for dietetic services, supported by a bilingual glossary I provide as a guide. Weeks fourteen and fifteen address writing skills, requiring students to complete a "Nutritional Assessment Form" and write short reports or essays. Finally, the semester concludes in week sixteen with a final test that assesses the practical application of the skills they have mastered.

The selection of these topics is intentional and strategic, designed to address specific classroom dynamics. A primary consideration is the significant variation in English proficiency among students, particularly regarding basic grammar concepts. Furthermore, given that this course is delivered only once a week to a large class of approximately 40 students, the instructional design must be highly effective. Therefore, this structured approach is essential to accommodate these logistical constraints while ensuring that every student can achieve the learning objectives despite the limited contact hours.

## **2.2 Teaching Method**

The pedagogical framework of this course adopts a student-centered approach that prioritizes contextual and cooperative learning over traditional passive instruction. Recognizing that language proficiency in a clinical setting requires more than just grammatical knowledge, the instruction focuses on creating an immersive environment where English becomes a functional tool for professional interaction. This way of thinking makes sure that students do not just take in knowledge but also actively build their understanding by working together with their peers in meaningful ways, which is similar to how teamwork is important in modern healthcare systems (Fransiska & Sigarete, 2025).

The class uses many engaging methods, like simulations, case studies, and project-based learning, to show how this approach works in real life. Students work together to solve complex nutritional problems, role-play dietetic consultations to practice client interaction, and work

on group projects that mirror real-world tasks like designing health campaigns. By integrating these dynamic methods, the learning process bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring graduates are ready to handle the multifaceted demands of the nutrition profession.

Crucially, the inherent flexibility of these student-centered tactics makes them highly adaptable to both traditional face-to-face training and online learning environments. For example, group discussions and case studies can be effortlessly transferred from physical classrooms to virtual breakout rooms, while project-based activities can be effectively managed using digital collaboration tools. This adaptability ensures that the communication practice required for ESP mastery remains strong and dynamic, whether the course is presented offline, online, or in a hybrid mode.

### 2.3 Activity Types

Learning activities are broken down into discrete categories that simulate real-world tasks in order to guarantee that language mastery directly transfers into professional competence. The first domain, *Clinical Communication Simulations*, focuses on building oral fluency and interpersonal skills. Through controlled role-plays, such as executing 24-hours food recalls and offering dietary counseling for specific conditions where students learn obtaining patient information and explaining limits with empathy and clarity. Secondly, *The Academic and Scientific Literacy* domain complements this by emphasizing evidence-based practice. During this level, students participate in activities such as "journal jigsaw reading" to deconstruct worldwide research and practice case report writing, ensuring they can understand global trends and report on patient progress in standard English.

To increase participation, the course incorporates technology directly into the learning process. *Bamboozle* and *Wayground* are two interactive applications that are used to gamify complex vocabulary review, effectively changing rote memory into exciting class competitions. Furthermore, the course requires the building of a full *E-Portfolio* on *Google Sites*. This portal functions as a personal repository

for students to create projects ranging from written diet plans to recorded counseling simulations, allowing them to track their linguistic progress while also creating the professional digital presence required in the modern health field.

## **2.4 Materials and Media**

This course's instructional materials are presented in a variety of media formats that are specifically tailored to sustain engagement and effectiveness in big class situations (Kodriyah et al., 2018). Visual knowledge is presented via extensive *PowerPoint* presentations and structured worksheets, which act as the major scaffolding for complicated nutritional topics. These visual aids assure that important material is effectively communicated to the entire group (Hasbi et al., 2026), while also providing students with practical guidelines for independent study. The course uses customized audio media for listening comprehension exercises that imitate real communication between health professionals and patients to help students improve the crucial auditory skills needed in clinical settings.

Furthermore, the usage of interactive digital tools such as *Wheel of Names* helps to maximize classroom dynamics. This program is used to randomly choose students for presentations or impromptu responses. This method is more than just for engagement but also plays a strategic function in large classrooms by guaranteeing a fair allocation of participation chances and sustaining high attention levels throughout the room. Collectively, these options enable the lecturer to accommodate a large number of students while maintaining the quality of individual attention and the lesson's ordered flow.

## **2.5 Vocabulary and Grammar Building**

Vocabulary and grammar are taught in this course as practical tools for professional communication. For vocabulary development, I prioritize terminology that students will use in their future jobs. I supply them with curated sets of terms that are pertinent to a nutritionist's daily work. To reinforce this terminology in an exciting way, I typically use

thematic crossword puzzles, which help students remember complicated phrases without the monotony of rote learning.

When it comes to grammar, the approach is completely functional and incorporated into performance (Hasbi et al., 2025). I usually evaluate grammatical accuracy through role plays and presentations. At the end of these sessions, I give specific remarks on the students' usage of tenses depending on the topic or issue they just described. This strategy ensures that students go beyond memorizing formulas and become accustomed to using proper syntax in real-world professional circumstances.

## **2.6 Targeted Language Skills**

Reading comprehension is emphasized as the most important ability in this course because nutritional science is a fast-evolving profession based on strong data. Because authoritative global standards are primarily published in English, knowledge in this language is absolutely required. Key references such as WHO and FAO recommendations, HACCP and ISO safety regulations, and influential clinical periodicals such as *The Lancet* and *AJCN* are predominantly available in English (Mohamed & Aljadaan, 2024). Without the capacity to understand these original sources, students risk career stagnation by relying on translated resources that are frequently out of date. As a result, the curriculum places a strong emphasis on specialized competencies such as decoding imported food labels, comprehending complex research, and analyzing technical manuals to guarantee graduates remain at the cutting edge of scientific innovation.

## **2.7 Assessment and Evaluation**

To ensure consistent progress, assessments are conducted during every session through a mix of quizzes, presentations, and practical case studies. A key activity involves role plays performed in pairs where students simulate real scenarios between a dietitian and a patient, which directly prepares them for their future careers. For the final evaluation, the course culminates in a project where students create an infographic focused on indigenous Indonesian plants that are at risk of extinction.

This assignment allows me to evaluate reading and writing proficiency by looking at grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation, as well as the overall clarity of the message delivered in their visual campaign.

### 3. FURTHER DISCUSSION

One of the biggest challenges in teaching ESP for nutritionists is deciding how to balance basic grammar instruction with specialized medical material. With limited class time, waiting for students to have perfect grammar before introducing professional topics is often impractical. Instead, recent studies suggest that it is more effective to teach language and content together. For example, students can learn command verbs while practicing how to give dietary instructions, rather than through isolated grammar drills (Alqurashi, 2016). This approach implies that the main goal is not to produce students with flawless English, but to shape them into "functional practitioners" who can communicate effectively in their workplace despite minor grammatical errors.

Furthermore, the curriculum must emphasize the cultural aspect of nutrition in addition to simply translating terms. Graduates must be able to convey local Indonesian circumstances to a global audience (Hasby et al., 2025) because eating habits are very personal and cultural. A quality ESP course should teach students how to use appropriate international terminology to explain specific local concepts, such the protein benefits of *tempe* or dietary changes during Ramadan. This change guarantees that students become cultural bridges who can link local knowledge with international scientific norms, rather than merely language users (Baker, 2015; Setiawan et al., 2026).

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