

# Equip Your Students to Communicate Nutrition with Excellence and Confidence

Barbara J Mayfield, MS, RDN, LD, FAND

## Learning Objectives:

Following the webinar, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the rationale for future nutrition and health professionals building their proficiency in communication along with nutrition expertise.
2. Describe 2 or more examples of communication activities that can be used to apply nutrition knowledge throughout the nutrition or dietetics curriculum including 1 or more they intend to implement or recommend for a course.
3. List the 3 principles for encouraging students to excel as nutrition communicators and describe at least one practical strategy they plan to use.

## Poll #1:

How important are communication skills to nutrition practice?

1. Not at all important
2. Minimally important
3. Somewhat important
4. Quite important
5. Extremely important

Sample of Communicating Nutrition: The Authoritative Guide is available here:

<https://www.nutritioncommunicator.com/communicating-nutrition>

Educator Resource Manual is available here:

<https://www.nutritioncommunicator.com/educators>

## Results of Nutrition Communication Survey for Dietetic Educators – 2020

A survey of dietetic educators was administered in early 2020. The aim of the survey was to assess how knowledge requirements and competencies related to nutrition communication (distinct from counseling) are currently covered across the curriculum. Results were used in developing instructor ancillary materials to accompany *Communicating Nutrition: The Authoritative Guide*, by assessing how thoroughly nutrition communication is covered and where educators need more guidance and resources. (n=154)

### Who responded to the survey: (multiple responses allowed)

47% professors, 31% program directors, 21% instructors, 11.5% preceptors, 6.5% adjunct faculty, 2.5% other

### % of respondents representing various types of programs: (multiple responses allowed)

50% graduate programs, 41% supervised practice, 43.5% undergraduate DPD, 18% undergraduate CP, 12% allied health, 8% other

### How does the program cover communication?

80% cover in multiple courses

20% cover primarily in one course dedicated to nutrition communication

*When this question was asked in the 2017 survey, 81% stated multiple courses and 19% a dedicated course.)*

### If a nutrition communication course is not offered, are there any plans for developing a course?

72.5% stated not at this time, 11.5% stated one is under development, and 16% are considering

### How is nutrition communication covered if not in a dedicated course?

The two most frequently listed course types were “nutrition counseling and education” and “community nutrition.” Other courses listed included: dietetics practicum, intro to internship, working with the media, lifecycle nutrition, cultural aspects of food, emerging issues course, intro to nutrition research, and others.

### How well do you think nutrition communication is covered?

46% of respondents stated coverage was better than adequate, 37% of respondents stated it was adequate, and 17% stated that it was less than adequate and needed better coverage. When this same question was asked in the 2017 survey, the responses were similar, but coverage was actually rated somewhat higher.

### Reasons coverage is less than adequate:

Communication is “glossed over,” we need to emphasize more than just public-speaking skills, needs to be modernized, needs practicum, not enough room in the curriculum, counseling emphasized over communication, it isn’t a focus.

### Respondent’s level of involvement in teaching nutrition communication:

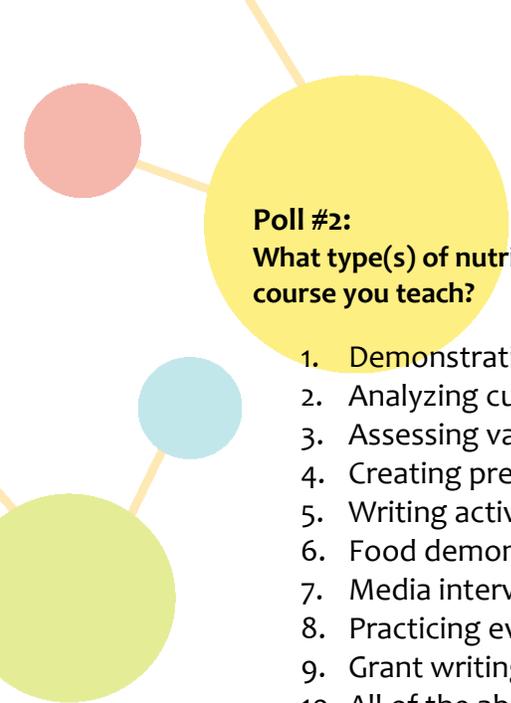
43% were program directors, 41% teach a course such as counseling/education, fewer than 18% instruct a nutrition communication course, approx. 16% were preceptors, and 12.5% do not address nutrition communication in their role.

### Areas cited as needing the most improvement in coverage/seeking help to enhance coverage:

communication theory, designing communication, message development, audience participation, video production, food styling and photography, effectively using mass media, writing for the popular press, social media, media interviews, effectively responding to questions

**Table 1. Communication concepts and practical application activities and assignments for covering nutrition communication across the curriculum.**

Possible sequence	Key Concepts, Section of Book, and Activity Examples
Freshman	<b>Communication is the essence of nutrition practice</b> , Section 1 <i>After a discussion of the characteristics of successful communicators (chapter 2), students create skits, videos, infographics, or social media posts to illustrate a concept discussed.</i>
Freshman/Sophomore	<b>Nutrition communication is science based</b> , Section 2 <i>Students select a headline, advertisement, or lay article related to food and nutrition and evaluate the credibility of the source, locate a research article related to the topic, write a brief 1-2 page report describing both sources without plagiarism and using proper citations.</i>
Sophomore/Junior	<b>Nutrition communication is audience-focused</b> , Section 3 <i>Teams of students select a target audience and complete an audience assessment that includes assessing constructs of behavior change, and culminates in creating one or more targeted messages to address an identified need.</i>
Junior/Senior	<b>Design and deliver presentations for impact</b> , Section 4 <i>Students design brief presentations for an upper-level foods or nutrition course with the purpose of explaining a complex concept effectively using a visual aid or creative approach other than PowerPoint.</i>
Junior/Senior	<b>Design and deliver communications via print, video, and demonstrations</b> , Section 5 <i>Students in a nutrition education and counseling course could create client handouts, create a recipe complete with a food photo and/or a link to a recipe video.</i>
Senior	<b>Design and deliver communications via mass media</b> , Section 6 <i>Students in an internship preparation course interview interns and record a podcast to share with the class.</i>
Supervised Practice	<b>Design and deliver successful communication</b> , Section 7 <i>Partner with the local Academy affiliate and involve the interns in affiliate meetings including planning logistics, introducing speakers, moderating Q&amp;A, marketing events, and evaluating programs.</i>
Graduate school	<b>Design and deliver professional communication</b> , Section 8 <i>Examples of advanced activities that utilize communication skills at the graduate level – presenting a research seminar, teaching a lecture for an undergraduate course, developing an online class lecture, facilitating a discussion, writing an article, writing a grant or project proposal, etc.</i>



**Poll #2:**

**What type(s) of nutrition communication activities are you most likely to incorporate into a course you teach?**

1. Demonstrating concepts of professionalism and communication goals
2. Analyzing current claims; practicing finding research and credible sources
3. Assessing various audiences and tailor messages
4. Creating presentations using visual aids and audience engagement
5. Writing activities – reports, newsletters, handouts, infographics, etc.
6. Food demonstrations and food photography
7. Media interviews, blogging, social media
8. Practicing event logistics, moderating, Q&A, marketing, and evaluation
9. Grant writing, journal articles, and more!
10. All of the above!!

### **3 P's to Improve Student Performance**

- **Preparation**
- **Practice**
- **Positive feedback**

**Poll #3:**

**How do you feel about incorporating nutrition communication experiences into your courses?**

1. Ready and enthusiastic to enhance my students' communication knowledge and skills!
2. Intrigued to investigate my options further and definitely plan on creating communication experiences for students.
3. Not quite ready but will plan to keep this on the horizon.
4. I just don't think this will work for the courses I teach.

# Communicating NUTRITION

## Part I: Nutrition Communication Is Built On A Firm Foundation: Professional, Science- Based, Audience-Focused

### Section 1: Communication Forms the Foundation of Professional Practice

*Showcase: Nutrition Communication Is an Art  
and a Science*

CHAPTER 1: Communication Is the  
Essence of Nutrition Practice

CHAPTER 2: Nutrition Professionals Are  
Effective Communicators

CHAPTER 3: Effective Nutrition  
Communication Is Strategically Designed

### Section 2: Nutrition Communication Is Science-Based

*Showcase: Nutrition Communicators Address the  
Global Challenge of Misinformation*

CHAPTER 4: Nutrition Communicators  
Access Scientific Research

CHAPTER 5: Nutrition Communicators  
Identify Credible Sources

CHAPTER 6: Nutrition Communicators  
Read and Interpret Research

CHAPTER 7: Nutrition Communicators  
Clearly Communicate Science

CHAPTER 8: Nutrition Communicators  
Properly Reference Sources

CHAPTER 9: Nutrition Communicators  
Adhere to the Code of Ethics for the  
Nutrition and Dietetics Profession

### Section 3: Nutrition Communication Is Audience-Focused

*Showcase: Creating a "New Nutrition  
Conversation with Consumers": A Timeless  
Approach to Consumer-Focused Messages*

CHAPTER 10: Effective Messages Are  
Created with and for an Audience

CHAPTER 11: A Needs Assessment  
Is Essential for Audience-Focused  
Communication

CHAPTER 12: Use Behavior Change  
Theories to Create Effective  
Communication

CHAPTER 13: Effective Nutrition  
Communication Is Tailored for the  
Target Culture

CHAPTER 14: Effective Communication  
Is Tailored for Different Ages

CHAPTER 15: Write Goals, Objectives,  
and Key Message Points to Focus and  
Organize a Message

## Part II: Nutrition Communication Is Designed and Delivered with Excellence

### Section 4: Designing and Delivering Presentations

*Showcase: Making Nutrition Come Alive!*

CHAPTER 16: Create High-Impact  
Presentations

CHAPTER 17: Deliver Strong Openings  
and Closings

CHAPTER 18: Utilize Visual Aids to  
Enhance Communication

CHAPTER 19: Facilitate Discussions to  
Generate Ideas and Solutions

CHAPTER 20: Engage Audiences with  
Participation Strategies

CHAPTER 21: Deliver Clear, Compelling  
Presentations

### Section 5: Designing and Delivering Communication via Print, Video, and Demonstrations

*Showcase: Web-Based Communication Provides  
Maximum Impact on a Minimal Budget*

CHAPTER 22: Write to Be Read,  
Understood, and Remembered

CHAPTER 23: Reach Target Audiences  
with Newsletters and Handouts

CHAPTER 24: Create Video to  
Maximize Impact

CHAPTER 25: Entertain and Educate  
with Food Demonstrations

CHAPTER 26: Inspire Audiences with  
Food Styling and Photography

### Section 6: Designing and Delivering Communication via Mass Media

*Showcase: A Podcast Journey: How I've Recorded  
More Than 300 Episodes over a Decade*

CHAPTER 27: Nutrition Communicators  
Have Greater Reach via Mass Media

CHAPTER 28: Nutrition Topics  
Make Popular Newspaper and  
Magazine Articles

CHAPTER 29: Social Media Is a Powerful  
Tool for Nutrition Communication and  
Professional Marketing

CHAPTER 30: Blogging and Web-Based  
Writing Establishes the Nutrition  
Communicator as an Expert Resource to  
a Wide Audience

CHAPTER 31: Online Education  
Is an Effective Tool for Nutrition  
Communicators

CHAPTER 32: Master Media Interviews  
to Be a Reliable and Relatable Expert

### Section 7: Practices That Can Make or Break Success in Designing and Delivering Communication

*Showcase: Effective Leadership Communication  
Promotes Success*

CHAPTER 33: Attention to Logistical  
Details Promotes Successful  
Communication

CHAPTER 34: An Effective Presider  
Sets the Stage

CHAPTER 35: Successful Audience  
Management Promotes Communication

CHAPTER 36: Strengthen  
Communication by Effectively  
Responding to Questions

CHAPTER 37: Market Products,  
Programs, and Messages to Maximize  
Response

CHAPTER 38: Measure Success with  
Testing and Evaluation

### Section 8: Designing and Delivering Professional Communications

*Showcase: Improving Communication Skills  
Requires Broad Shoulders*

CHAPTER 39: Business Communication  
Demonstrates Professionalism

CHAPTER 40: Quality Communication in  
Grant and Project Proposals Is Rewarded

CHAPTER 41: Nutrition Communicators  
Publish Research in Peer-Reviewed  
Journals

CHAPTER 42: Nutrition Communicators  
Write Books to Make a Difference

# Meet Barb Mayfield

Barbara J. Mayfield, MS, RDN, LD, FAND, is a nutrition communicator with expertise in business, academia, community programs, professional writing, and speaking. Barb served as Editor-in-Chief for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics *Communicating Nutrition: The Authoritative Guide*, published in 2020. As president of Nutrition Communicator, LLC, she leads other nutrition professionals to hone their communication skills and more effectively reach diverse audiences. Barb's presentations are engaging and interactive, tailored to the audience, up-to-date, reality-based, and inspiring. Barb enjoys giving keynotes, concurrent sessions, longer workshops, and webinars.

Her educational background includes a B.S. in Dietetics from Purdue University and an M.S. in Human Nutrition from Cornell University. She received multiple teaching awards at Purdue, and was named Outstanding Dietetics Educator by both the Indiana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Nutrition and Dietetic Educators and Preceptors (NDEP) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Earlier in her career, she received the Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year Award from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and the Outstanding Young Professional Award from the Purdue University Alumni Association. In 2018, she was inducted into the Purdue Nutrition Science Hall of Fame. In 2019, the Indiana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics named her Outstanding Dietitian. She has been nicknamed "The Singing Dietitian" for her unusual approach to teaching nutrition through the medium of music. Barb lives in Delphi, Indiana. She and her husband Joe have three grown children and five grandchildren.

## Social media and web addresses:

Website: [www.nutritioncommunicator.com](http://www.nutritioncommunicator.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NutritionCommunicator](http://www.facebook.com/NutritionCommunicator)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NCommunicator>

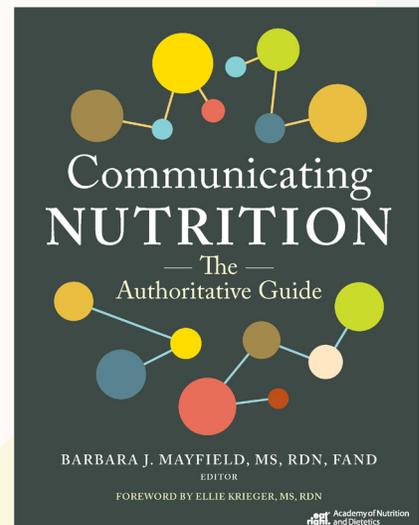
<https://twitter.com/BarbMayfield>

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/nutritioncommunicator](http://www.instagram.com/nutritioncommunicator)

[www.instagram.com/talknutrition4students](http://www.instagram.com/talknutrition4students)

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/barbara-mayfield](http://www.linkedin.com/in/barbara-mayfield)

Email: [barb@nutritioncommunicator.com](mailto:barb@nutritioncommunicator.com)



**Buy *Communicating Nutrition: The Authoritative Guide* on the eatrightSTORE today.**