Part I. Nutrition Communication Is Built on a Firm Foundation: Professional, Science-Based, Audience-Focused

The first part of the book covers three foundational pillars of nutrition communication:

1. the professionalism of the credentialed food and nutrition professional, who is knowledgeable in both nutrition and communication;
2. the scientific evidence-base for nutrition messages; and
3. its focus on the audience, addressing their needs, culture, and preferences.

**Key message:**

**The practice of nutrition communication is carried out by credentialed food and nutrition professionals who are well-trained in nutrition *and* communication, and, is evidence-based and audience-focused.**

Before undertaking the creation of various forms nutrition communication, which are described in Part II of the book, it is essential to understand these foundational principles. Each time a nutrition communicator goes through the process of designing and delivering nutrition communication, fundamental skills such as accessing and translating research, assessing audience needs, and developing key messages will be put into practice.

Section 1: Nutrition Communication is an Art and a Science

This section orients the reader to nutrition communication and sets the stage for the remaining chapters. It serves as a review of communication theory put into the context of nutrition science. It establishes the importance of communication excellence to the practice of nutrition.

The titles emphasize the main ideas of each of the three chapters:

* Chapter 1: Communication Is the Essence of Nutrition Practice
* Chapter 2: Nutrition Professionals Are Effective Communicators
* Chapter 3: Effective Nutrition Communication Is Strategically Designed

Use the following questions as you read the section showcase and Chapters 1 through 3 to increase your understanding and put your knowledge into practice.

Section 1 Showcase

1. The authors describe nutrition communication as both an art and a science. Is this an accurate description in your opinion? How is nutrition communication both an **art** and a **science**? Describe examples of both of these facets of the field.

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1. What do the authors say are essential practices for nutrition communicators to be successful?

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1. Figure 2 illustrates a systems approach, which can be used to understand the complex field of food and nutrition. How might this approach help nutrition communicators? Can you think of an example of a food and nutrition topic and describe where it fits within this model, possibly in more than one location?

Chapter 1

1. The title of Chapter 1 is Communication is the Essence of Nutrition Practice. Do you agree? Does it matter whether a registered dietitian nutritionist is a skilled communicator as well as a food and nutrition expert? How important do you believe communication skills are to the practice of dietetics?

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1. Can you think of any dietetics position that does not depend on good communication skills? Which is more important to professional success: subject-matter expertise or communication expertise? What do you think? What would be the outcome of having only one and not the other?

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1. Following the example in Box 1.1, write an example of a purpose, goal, and objective for any topic of your choosing.

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1. List five or more compelling reasons nutrition professionals need to be skilled communicators:

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1. List five or more different ways nutrition professionals can use to communicate:

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1. How do theories and models help us?

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1. The book states: “Communication is more than a message; it is a relational activity.” How does the framework (Figure 1.1) illustrate that concept?

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1. How would you explain Figure 1.2 to a colleague? Consumer?

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1. Read the section titled, “Nutrition Communication Requires Skill and Creativity” beginning on page 18. Select one or more soft skills and one or more hard skills you most want to improve as you study nutrition communication.

Soft skill(s):

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Hard skill(s):

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Chapter 2

1. Reflect on the quote opening Chapter 2 found on page 22. Do you agree that communication is a learned skill?

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1. The introduction to this chapter asks readers to “Consider where you are on your journey as a nutrition communicator. What knowledge and skills do you need to acquire or develop?” Read the first section of the chapter listing communication-related knowledge requirements, core competencies, and performance indicators. Using these lists as prompts, list below areas you feel the greatest need to build your knowledge and skills (adding other areas you can think of):

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1. What is professionalism? *Before* completing the reading described below, reflect on your definition of professionalism. When you hear the word professionalism, what comes to mind? Using just one or two sentences, write your own definition below:

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1. Look up professionalism in a dictionary. Compare your definition to the dictionary definition. How are they the same? How are they different?

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1. Read What Are the Characteristics of Successful Communicators? in Chapter 2, pages 27 to 29, focusing on the section Successful Nutrition Communicators are Credible, Professionalism, and Integrity. List three or more ideas below from this section that you find compelling:

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1. Locate one additional source about professionalism. List the source below and give an example that adds to what was presented in the book:

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1. **Reflection:** Using any of the characteristics described in the book, as well as others you feel are important, write your own description of professionalism below.

Professionalism is…

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1. List below several ways **you** intend to cultivate professionalism:

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1. Before reading further in the chapter, create two lists of characteristics or traits you have witnessed displayed in the two types of communicators described below.

Bring to mind an outstanding teacher or presenter from your personal experience. Without naming names, who was this individual (ie, middle school history teacher, presenter at a leadership conference, etc.)? Describe the qualities or characteristics that made them a great communicator:

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Now think of someone who you would describe as a not-so-great communicator. Without naming names, who were they, and why were they ineffective? List the qualities or characteristics that made them a poor communicator:

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1. Continue reading Chapter 2, Successful Nutrition Communicators Are Compelling and Successful Nutrition Communicators Are Continually Improving, pages 29 to 32. What traits of successful communicators are included in addition to what you listed above?

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1. What three attributes of great communicators do you aspire to achieve:

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1. What three attributes of poor communicators do you aspire to rid yourself of:

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1. Finish reading the chapter. List below specific ways you plan to learn and grow as a nutrition communicator:

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Chapter 3

1. This chapter opens with the statement, “Effective nutrition communication is not an accident.” If not an accident, how is it achieved?

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1. What are the three things nutrition communicators must focus on to be effective?

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1. What are the three corresponding components of the nutrition communication development strategy?

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1. Why must the step of identifying the audience come before determining the message or channel?

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1. Which of the shortcuts on pages 42 to 43 describe something you need to put into practice to achieve positive outcomes? Which of the 10 steps listed in Box 3.1 does it help you accomplish?

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1. Read Who Is Involved? beginning on page 43. As you read, consider an example of an audience you work with or envision working with in the future. Using the figure of the social-ecological model (Figure 3.2), list people or groups of people at each level that are examples surrounding the target audience you selected. Consider how you could collaborate at all levels to create more effective messages and programs.

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1. Read the section on Effective Teamwork on pages 45 to 46. Similar to the exercise you completed for Chapter 2, bring to mind an effective team you have been a part of as well as an ineffective team. Write down an example of each type of team that illustrates a point in this section.

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1. Read the section, What Defines Successful Communication? beginning on page 46. Describe specific ways a nutrition communicator can accomplish each of the following facets of success:

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| Communicator and Audience “Connect” |
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| Message Is Clearly Understood |
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| Channel Is Effective |
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1. Use one of these links found in the resources section to assess your ability to “read the mind in the eyes”:

Reading the Mind in the Eyes test: [www.questionwritertracker.com/quiz/61 /Z4MK3TKB.html](http://www.questionwritertracker.com/quiz/61%20/Z4MK3TKB.html)

Social Intelligence Test: <http://socialintelligence.labinthewild.org/mite>

Did the results surprise you?

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