

The Dietitian as an Educator & Researcher

COURSE: CHAPTER 9

BOOK: CHAPTER 13, 14

Introduction

❖ All dietitians are educators, most frequently in locations other than the classroom.

- ❖ Clinical dietetics?
- ❖ Food service manager?
- ❖ Community dietetics?

Table 13-1. % of Educational Activities Performed by Entry-Level Dietitians and Dietetic Technicians

Activity	RD Percent	DTR Percent
Asses Assess learning needs of patients/clients, employees, and students	90	73
Develop instructional materials for individuals and group	81	58
Teach classes or laboratories	48	38
Evaluate learner knowledge and performance	64	48
Supervise students or precept interns	55	32
Provide health-promotion or risk-reduction programs to population groups	21	12
Distribute nutrition information through the media	17	6
Design individual courses or seminars for patients, clients, employees, and students		51
Design group-related courses for educational institutions	16	0
Evaluate educational programs	23	0
Design services to meet nutrition-related needs of population	19	0

Introduction

❖ The educator role is one of the most important a dietitian fulfills.

❖ Knowledge of subject matter is attained by:

- Academic preparation
- Practical experience
- Understanding of how to teach effectively and how people learn
- Observation of other educators
- Continuing education
- Professional experience

Educator Roles

“ Everything you say or do as well as everything you fail to say will communicate messages. You cannot not influence people”

Educator Role

Mentor

Coach

Preceptor

Counselor

Communicator

Mentor

- ❖ A person who may teach verbally, by demonstration of particular activities or skills, role modeling, or a combination of these approaches.
- ❖ The mentoring relationship is a shared experience between a teacher and a learner.
- ❖ A mentor may be one's peer, an instructor, a trusted advisor, or anyone more skilled (Ex: a teenager who helps a grandparent become computer literate)
- ❖ The mentor may also be described as a tutor in that one-on-one teaching is the method used.

Coach

- ❖ One who inspires and motivates others. The role assumed with individuals who are already achieving at a high level and is simply positive feedback for continued high performance.
- ❖ The coaching role is effective when involvement and trust are created, expectations are clarified, performance is acknowledged, actions are challenged, and achievement is rewarded.
- ❖ Similar to reflective teaching in that the teacher may demonstrate a new procedure or piece of information, and the learner repeats this. The coach responds with advice, criticism, explanation, description, or further demonstration. The learner reflects and compares the new information to his or her previous knowledge and acts accordingly.

Preceptor

- ❖ The preceptor is one who provides direction and instruction, supervised performance, and evaluation of the learners ability in applied practice.
- ❖ A preceptor must have good interpersonal and time management skills as well as subject-matter competence as a skilled practitioner.
- ❖ Among the benefits for preceptors observed in one study were assisting students with application of knowledge and expertise, observing students' growth from novice to practitioner, and stimulating ongoing interest in the profession.

Counselor

- ❖ Counseling is a process of listening, accepting, clarifying, and helping clients or students form conclusions and develop plans of action.
- ❖ The process is guided toward helping individuals learn about their needs and about methods of coping with them.
- ❖ Patient-centered counseling facilitates change by assessing patients' needs and tailoring the intervention to the patient's stage in the process of change, personal goals, and unique challenges. Four steps are followed: assessment, advising, assisting, and follow-up.
- ❖ Open-ended questions will help gain this information.

Open-ended questions

How do you feel about your current diet?

What problems have you had because of your diet?

What difficulties did you encounter? How did you handle them?

What could help you cope with this challenge? How?

What are you willing to change in your diet now?

What helped you stay on target?

What would you like to do now?

Practice

Scenario: A mom with a 7 year old child says: “I’m having a hard time convincing my child to eat a healthy diet”

You ask: Does Billy like fruits and vegetables?

What do you think of the question and the mother’s possible responses?

How can you change this?

Communicator

Effective communication is of utmost importance in all areas of dietetics. Professionals who develop verbal, written, and listening skills establish strong relationships.

Components of the communication process:

1. Source. The source is the starting point for information exchange.
2. Message. The message is the idea or information transmitted verbally or nonverbally.
3. Channel. The channel is the pathway for messages between the sender and the receiver.
4. Receiver. The receiver takes in the message, assigns meaning, interprets, and responds to the message.
5. Feedback. Feedback refers to the response from the receiver to the sender.
6. Environment. The environment is the context in which the message occurs, such as physical surroundings and cultural, historic, or attitudinal factors.
7. Noise. Noise is any aural, visual, or internal factor that can distract from the meaning of the message.

Career Opportunities in Education

Elementary and Secondary Schools

- ❖ Teaching: School-based nutrition education is incorporated into health and science classes
- ❖ A dietitian who teaches must meet teacher training and certification requirements.
- ❖ Creating curricula to integrate nutrition with other subjects
- ❖ Training teachers to deliver nutrition education.
- ❖ School-based health centers

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Career Opportunities in Education

Colleges & Universities

- ❖ Teaching: culinary institutes, technical schools, and 2- or 4-year colleges.
- ❖ Conduct research and provide service within the institution, community, or profession.
- ❖ Share expertise with the media and the public
- ❖ Nutrition courses for non-dietetics majors to fulfill requirements for general education

Career Opportunities in Education

Medical & Dental Education

- ❖ Education: an emphasis on prevention and health promotion, and an in-depth knowledge of nutrition science and medical nutrition therapy is required. It may consist of nutrition science with clinical application during the first 2 years while basic information is the major part of the curriculum.
- ❖ Such a role requires assertiveness and creativity to convince administrators of the unique contributions that dietitians have to offer in medical and dental education.

Career Opportunities in Education

Nursing & Allied Health Professions Education

- ❖ Nutrition services are often provided by nondietitians (Ex: nurses regularly monitor food intake, evaluate laboratory values indicative of nutritional status, and give patients nutritional advice)
- ❖ Health educators often screen for health or nutritional problems and provide education and intervention.
- ❖ All health professionals should understand the role nutrition plays.

Career Opportunities in Education

Industry-Based Education

- ❖ Sales: Companies that manufacture medical nutrition products often employ dietitians to provide technical and clinical information to the sales force and to other personnel

(Institutional equipment, food products, supplemental products such as high-protein and other preparations for tube feedings, infant formula, and supplements for nutritional additives)

Career Opportunities in Education

Work-Site Nutrition Education

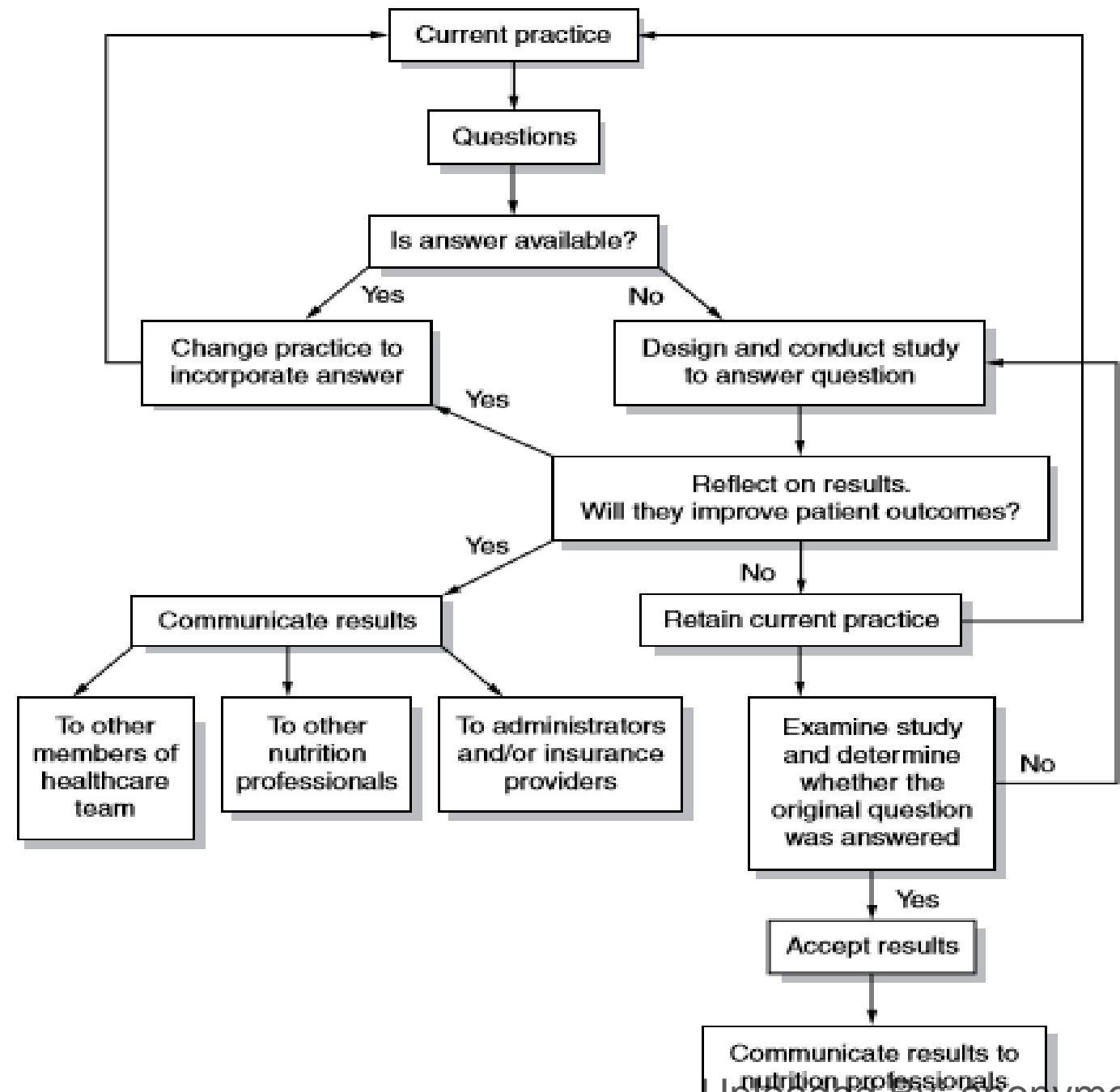
- ❖ As increased attention is given to the role of nutrition in health and disease prevention, more opportunities for dietitians will open in work-site wellness programs.
- ❖ Includes: manufacturing plants, insurance companies, and service organizations.
- ❖ Nutrition education, screening for nutritional risk, program development, leading classes and demonstrations, creating exhibits and displays, and evaluating the effectiveness of nutrition education initiatives.

The Researcher Dietitian

Importance of Research in Dietetics

- ❖ Research produces the **scientific evidence** upon which dietetics practice is based
- ❖ Research is essential in the **advancement** of our profession, especially to meet the ever-changing needs in society
- ❖ People who are using dietetic services need to be **assured** they are using services supported by research
- ❖ The ability to conduct and use research allows the professional to be recognized as **a valued and credible source** of scientifically-based nutrition information

How Research and Clinical Practice are Integrated.



Career Opportunities in Research

Academic Health Centers

- University-affiliated hospitals have centers dedicated to clinical research
- Additional knowledge is needed in nutritional assessment, requirements, and interventions

Food Companies

- Product/recipe development research
- Translation of research into meaningful information to the public
- Development of nutrition education material

Industry

- Conduct research or monitor clinical investigations in areas such as:
 - Nutritional needs
 - Acceptability of flavor/texture
 - Effectiveness
 - Cost-effectiveness

Government

- Research in government-sponsored centers and laboratories, such as:
 - USDA
 - CDC

Research: Foundation of the Dietetics Profession

The American Dietetic Association believes that research is the foundation of the profession, providing the basis for practice, education, and policy.

