

Application of English Teaching Methods in Nursing: Comparison of Learning Outcomes Before and After Midterm Exam

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ABSTRACT

ESP constitutes a vital component of the nursing education curriculum, as healthcare professionals are required to engage in cross-cultural communication, comprehend international medical literature, and prepare accurate and standardized nursing care documentation. Students' success in acquiring these competencies is highly dependent on the relevance and effectiveness of the instructional methods implemented during the learning process. This study aims to describe the teaching methods employed in Nursing English before and after the midterm examination, and to compare student learning outcomes based on midterm and final examination scores. A mixed-methods research design utilizing an explanatory sequential model was adopted, involving 35 fourth-year undergraduate nursing students at the Faculty of Nursing, Unipdu Jombang. Qualitative data regarding instructional methods were obtained through learning process records, while quantitative data were derived from student academic achievement documents. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test. The findings reveal a notable shift in teaching approaches: from theory-oriented instruction and translation exercises prior to the midterm examination, to practice-based learning, clinical simulations, and role-playing activities thereafter. Quantitatively, the average score improved from 78.80 at the midterm stage to 83.11 in the final assessment. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference with a p -value < 0.05 . In conclusion, the transition from conventional teaching strategies to an approach centered on clinical requirements and practical application proved effective in enhancing academic performance. Instructional methods specifically tailored to the professional context of nursing were found to be more effective in promoting students' comprehension and mastery of English language competencies.

Keywords: Teaching methods; Nursing English; Learning outcomes; ESP; Nursing students.

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INTRODUCTION

English has now become the primary language used internationally in the fields of healthcare and medicine. For anyone working in the nursing profession, English proficiency is no longer merely an additional skill, but an absolute requirement that must be met as part of professional competence. This is essential so that nurses can communicate fluently with patients from diverse cultural backgrounds and countries, fully understand globally applicable medical guidelines and procedures, and keep up with the latest scientific developments by reading English-language medical journals or literature (Gunay & Kilic, 2018). For this reason, the Nursing English course has been made a required course and incorporated into the nursing higher education curriculum throughout Indonesia, including at the Faculty of Health Sciences at Unipdu Jombang.

In terms of its classification, Nursing English falls under the category of English for Specific Purposes, commonly abbreviated as ESP. The fundamental principle of ESP is that the course content and teaching methods are specifically designed to meet the actual needs of the students, ranging from the topics covered, the vocabulary used, to the specific contexts in which the language is applied (Hutchinson & Waters, 2014). This is clearly very different from General English, which covers a wide range of topics, from hobbies and travel to everyday conversations. In this course, everything is limited to matters directly related to the world of nursing, such as how to communicate in a patient care setting, understanding medical terminology, how to write nursing care reports, and the ability to read health-related texts.

However, if we look at the actual practice in the field, something quite interesting happens during the teaching and learning process. Typically, the methods used by instructors evolve over the course of a semester. In the early sessions, the teaching style remains conventional, focusing more on theory, translation, and memorizing vocabulary. The goal is indeed to ensure students have a strong foundation first. Then, once students are deemed to have sufficient knowledge—usually after the Midterm Exam—the method is immediately shifted to a more practical, active approach, directly applied through simulations or case studies. Although this pattern of change is common, unfortunately, there has been little research that thoroughly documents and analyzes whether this shift in teaching methods actually has a tangible impact on the rise or fall of students' academic performance.

This situation becomes even more intriguing when examining real data from fourth-semester students at Unipdu Jombang. From the available grade records, it is clear that students' grades between the midterm and final exams vary significantly. Some saw a significant increase, some remained the same, while others saw a slight decrease. It is this variation in results that prompted this study, as it is strongly suspected that changes in teaching methods before and after the midterm exam are the primary factors causing these differences in achievement.

Based on this background, this study has the following main objectives: first, to clearly describe the forms of the Nursing English teaching methods implemented by lecturers before and after the midterm exam. Second, to illustrate student learning outcomes as seen through a comparison of existing midterm and final exam grades. Finally, to determine whether there are significant differences in student learning outcomes before and after the implementation of these changes in teaching methods. The results of this study are expected to serve as evaluation material and a reference so that future English learning strategies become more effective, appropriate, and truly support the competencies required of a nurse

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in Nursing

The basic concept of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is built on the idea that the language learning process will be far more effective if learners clearly understand the purpose of the language, and if the material studied is truly relevant to the professional needs of their future careers. Specifically in the context of nursing, the curriculum is entirely focused on practical communication skills applied in healthcare settings. As noted by Allum & McGarr (2010), the core material covers how to take a patient's medical history, explain medical procedures, provide health education, and write patient progress notes using appropriate and standardized language—without delving into general topics unrelated to the profession. Because the nature of this material is highly technical and specific, instructors are required not only to be fluent in English but also to understand workflows, the context of care, and the technical terminology used in the nursing field (Jordan, 2012).

The implementation of this material in teaching and learning activities should be structured in stages to achieve optimal and well-organized results. Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) emphasize that a step-by-step method is the most appropriate approach, beginning with mastery of theory, vocabulary, and language structure, followed by practical application and active communication. This aligns with the perspective of Hutchinson & Waters (2014), who explain that the entire content and methods of ESP instruction must be fully grounded in the learners' needs to ensure that learning is relevant and beneficial. Furthermore, Basturkmen (2010) and Glendinning & Holmström (2015) add that the development of an effective curriculum must follow a logical sequence: understand basic concepts, master specific terminology, practice sentence structures, and finally be ready to apply them in authentic communication. This view is supported by the findings of Nata (2025), who states that the sequence of learning is crucial, as students must first master the fundamentals of medical language before being guided to use it in real-world nursing care situations.

A step-by-step learning approach that combines theoretical mastery at the beginning with practical application at the end has been proven to have a significant positive impact on students' understanding and skills. Chairuddin et al. (2025) explain that combining lecture and translation methods in the early stages, followed by active learning activities, results in a much stronger and deeper understanding of the material. Setiawan & Rahayu (2023) add that while conventional methods are highly effective for building a knowledge foundation, the application of active methods is far superior in improving academic performance and practical skills. The shift in learning strategies from teacher-centered to student-centered makes the subject matter more meaningful, engaging, and memorable, especially when presented in the form of simulations and role-playing (Wulandari & Sudarwati, 2023; Nunan, 2014). Grice & Greenan (2008) also emphasize that combining theoretical explanations with hospital-based simulations can strengthen students' readiness to face real-world work environments.

The success of implementing this learning strategy is clearly evident in the improvement of students' academic achievements and overall communication skills. Liu et al. (2024) found that a gradual shift in teaching methods not only increased the group's average grades but also elevated the abilities of students who initially performed at a low level to meet the expected competency standards. This is supported by Sari & Wibowo (2022), who assert that simulation and role-playing methods have been proven to effectively improve learning outcomes and student confidence, as effective learning must shift from mere theoretical knowledge toward the functional communication skills required in the healthcare field (Silva, 2025). Statistically, the significance of these positive impacts has been validated, with Susanto & Pratiwi

(2024) showing a significance level of < 0.05 , and Santoso (2024) finding a value of 0.002—both proving that the change in method yields a real impact rather than mere coincidence. In conclusion, Rahman & Fitriani (2024) state that the alignment of course content with professional needs is the key to effective learning, and the combination of conventional and communicative methods ensures that students possess a strong foundation as well as competent and ready-to-use applied skills. Methods of Teaching English for Nursing Teaching methods in ESP are actually constantly evolving, ranging from conventional styles to approaches that prioritize direct communication. According to Lestari's (2021) research, at the beginning of the semester, students are typically

METHODS OF RESEARCH

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods design using a sequential explanatory model. This approach was chosen because the researcher aims to present quantitative data on learning outcomes and then provide a more in-depth explanation based on the actual conditions during the learning process and the teaching methods employed, which serve as qualitative data. The research activities were divided into two main stages: the initial stage, which involved the collection and processing of grade data; and the subsequent stage, which involved a detailed description of the teaching methods used before and after the midterm exam.

The target of this study is all fourth-semester undergraduate nursing students currently taking the Nursing English course at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Unipdu Jombang, during the current academic year. The sampling technique employed was a comprehensive or saturated sampling method, meaning the entire student population—totaling 35 students—was included as the sample in this study.

Instruments and Data Collection

Data collection in this study utilized two complementary primary instruments. The first was secondary data, consisting of official, validated, and recorded documents of Mid-Semester and Final Exam scores, which contained the complete learning outcomes of the 35 student respondents. The second instrument was field notes, which documented the entire learning process in detail. These records detail the course material presented, the teaching methods applied, the learning media used, and various activities conducted by both the instructor and the students. All of these elements were documented from the first through the eighth session prior to the exam, and continued through the sixteenth session following the completion of the mid-semester exam.

Data analysis in this study was conducted in stages and tailored to the type of data obtained. For qualitative data focused on teaching methods, the process followed the stages outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The first step was data reduction, which involved sorting, summarizing, and identifying key points deemed important—whether related to the types of methods used, the material presented, or the roles played by instructors and students. Next, data presentation is conducted, where all information is neatly organized into narrative descriptions or comparison tables, clearly highlighting the differences in approaches before and after the midterm exam. Finally, conclusions are drawn as the result of an in-depth interpretation of the distinctive characteristics of each implemented learning pattern.

For quantitative data in the form of Mid-Semester Exam and Final Exam scores, the analysis was conducted through two main stages. The first was descriptive statistics, calculating the mean, maximum, minimum, and standard deviation. The aim was to clearly and easily illustrate the distribution of learning outcomes for all students. The next step was a difference test using the nonparametric Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. This method was chosen because the data being analyzed is paired and of ordinal or interval type. This test aims to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between achievement before and after the method change, with a significance level set below 0.05. The entire process of calculating and processing this data was performed using specialized statistical software to ensure accurate and valid results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on an analysis of the learning process records, two teaching approaches were identified that showed significant differences between the pre-midterm and post-midterm phases. These differences were evident in terms of methods, materials, and activities. A detailed comparison of the learning characteristics in both phases is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Learning Characteristics in Nursing English

Aspect of Learning	Before Midterm Examination (Meeting 1–8)	After Midterm Examination (Meeting 9–16)
Main Method	Lecture, Translation, Written Exercises	Clinical Simulation, Role Play, Medical Document Analysis
Material Focus	Introduction to anatomical & physiological terms, basic sentence structures, comprehension of simple health-related texts	Clinical communication, procedural instructions, nursing care report writing, patient education
Lecturer's Role	Material presenter, concept explainer, answer checker	Facilitator, practice supervisor, discussion guide
Student Activities	Listening, note-taking, translating sentences, vocabulary exercises	Interacting, discussing, practicing conversation, drafting medical reports
ESP Approach	Content-Based	Task & Skills-Based

The analysis results indicate that in the pre-midterm exam phase, the learning process was more instructor-centered, with a primary focus on establishing foundational knowledge and understanding of language concepts. Conversely, in the post-midterm exam phase, the approach shifted to being student-centered. In this stage, the instructor acts as a facilitator and mentor, while students actively practice applying the learning material to various situations tailored to the real-world conditions of the nursing work environment. Analysis of Student Learning Outcomes

Midterm and final exam scores from 35 students were processed and analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide an overview of learning outcomes. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Midterm and Final Exam Scores (n=35)

Statistical Indicator	Midterm Examination Grade	Final Examination Grade
Highest Score	85	96
Lowest Score	68	74
Mean (Average)	78.80	83.11
Standard Deviation	5.23	5.41

Based on the data presented in Table 2, an improvement in achievement was identified across all measured statistical indicators. The average score of the student group increased by 4.31 points, rising from 78.80 during the Midterm Exam to 83.11 during the Final Exam. A significant improvement is also evident in the highest score achieved by students, which increased substantially from 85 to 96. Similarly, the lowest score also rose from 68 to 74. This indicates an overall improvement in the quality of learning outcomes, both in terms of average performance and the distribution of individual student scores.

When examined individually, the data shows that the majority of respondents—27 students, or 77.14 percent—succeeded in improving their scores from the Mid-Semester Exam to the Final Exam. A small portion, namely 5 students or 14.29 percent, maintained relatively stable scores with no significant changes. Meanwhile, only 3 students, or 8.57 percent, experienced a very slight decrease in their scores. One example of the highest improvement recorded a change in score from 80 on the Mid-Semester Exam to 96 on the Final Semester Exam.

To determine whether this improvement was statistically significant or merely coincidental, a difference test was conducted using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. The results of the statistical analysis showed an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.002. Given that the significance value obtained was smaller than the set significance level, namely 0.05 or $p < 0.05$, it can be scientifically concluded that there is a significant difference in student learning outcomes. This confirms that the change in the teaching method implemented has a tangible and positive impact on improving mastery of Nursing English material.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, a shift in learning strategies was identified that is consistent and aligned with the basic principles of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In the early stages of the course or before the Mid-Semester Exam, the learning process was focused entirely on building a foundation of knowledge, which was carried out through the use of lecture and translation methods. This is in line with the views of Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), who explain that in the initial stages of ESP learning, a content-based approach is absolutely necessary to build a foundation

In addition to the increases in the average and highest scores, another very important point to highlight is the rise in the lowest score threshold, which changed from 68 to 74. This data indicates that the change in learning strategy not only benefits students who already had strong English skills or were academically gifted from the start, but also significantly helps students with initially low or inadequate

skills to improve themselves to a much more appropriate competency standard and meet graduation requirements. A contextual and relevant learning approach makes materials that were initially considered difficult, complex, and confusing much easier to understand, engaging, and not boring. As a result, students who were previously uninterested, felt afraid, or struggled with learning English became more motivated, enthusiastic, and confident to study even harder.

From the perspective of general nursing competency development, the results of this study have highly positive and strategic implications. The increasingly high-quality mastery of English, particularly when tailored to clinical and healthcare service contexts, will serve as invaluable academic preparation for students as they undertake clinical practice in hospitals or healthcare facilities. This becomes increasingly important and urgent, particularly in healthcare facilities serving foreign patients or hospitals that have adopted international service standards and require healthcare personnel capable of global communication. Furthermore, the ability to communicate and master English for professional purposes is now also one of the primary indicators for assessing graduate quality—a skill highly sought after in the increasingly competitive and open healthcare job market.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that the sequence, stages, and selection of appropriate teaching methods have a significant and tangible impact on students' learning outcomes. A strategic combination of conventional methods in the early stages to build a solid knowledge foundation, followed by active and practical methods in subsequent stages to hone and develop the skills to apply the material, has proven to be a highly appropriate, effective, and efficient strategy in teaching Nursing English. This learning model ensures that students are not only theoretically knowledgeable but also possess strong practical skills, making them ready to enter and compete in the real-world workplace in accordance with the actual demands of the nursing profession.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and in-depth discussion presented above, the following key conclusions can be drawn. Clear and distinct differences in the characteristics of the teaching methods used for Nursing English were identified between the periods before and after the midterm exam. In the pre-exam phase, the approach used was conventional, with learning activities primarily centered on the instructor as the primary source of knowledge. The material focused entirely on mastering theory, understanding medical vocabulary, and mastering correct sentence structure through lectures and text translation. Conversely, in the post-exam phase, there was a shift toward a much more active, participatory, and student-centered approach. Learning was directed toward applying the material in real-world practice through various activities, such as clinical scenario simulations, role-playing in nursing care, and the analysis and preparation of medical documents in accordance with standards.

Empirically, there is a significant and commendable improvement in learning outcomes when comparing the scores between the Mid-Semester Exam and the Final Semester Exam. Quantitatively, the average score of the student group increased from 78.80 to 83.11. Similarly, regarding other indicators, the highest score achieved increased from 85 to 96, and the lowest score also improved from 68 to 74. This change is supported by the fact that the majority of respondents—approximately 77.14 percent of the total—succeeded in achieving a significant increase in their scores. This serves as a strong indicator that the

learning process designed and implemented has a tangible positive impact on enhancing students' abilities. Based on the results of the statistical tests conducted, it has been scientifically proven that there is a meaningful and significant difference between learning outcomes before and after the implementation of the teaching method changes, with a significance value of 0.002—which is smaller than the significance threshold of 0.05. This finding proves that the development of teaching strategies that are gradually adapted to the stages of skill development and aligned with professional nursing needs has a very significant influence and determines success in improving a comprehensive and in-depth mastery of Nursing English material.

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