

TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING ONLINE FORMAT, GEN0315 COURSE, LIFE TO STOP OBESITY

Paitoon Charoenpak¹, Wichuda Kunnu²

*¹The Office of General Education and Innovative Electronic Learning
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University*

*²Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
Email: paitoon.ch@ssru.ac.th¹, wichuda.ku@ssru.ac.th²*

ABSTRACT

This study's objectives are to examine the current state, problems, and needs for organizing learning activities, as well as teaching management techniques for an online format of the GEN0315 "Life to Stop Obesity" course; to design and implement learning activities for students registered in the program; and to evaluate the learning activities in terms of the students' satisfaction. Questionnaires were answered by 2 teaching professors, 1 teaching assistant, and students registered for the course in the academic year of 2021 of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. 356 students took the survey before the commencement of the course, and 829 students did after the completion of the course. 400 students also took a separate survey regarding their satisfaction. The questionnaires were distributed online. Frequency and percentage statistics were calculated, and the answers were analyzed.

Results indicated that:

1. In the study of the current state, problems, and needs for organizing learning activities for students who registered in the "Life to Stop Obesity" course, several motivations for registering for the course were found. 42 per cent of the students wished to learn the correct ways to control their body weights; 21 per cent wished to take better care of their health; 36 per cent wished to learn how to get healthier, lose weight, and maintain a better physique; and 34 per cent wished to learn about techniques and ways to lose weight. In terms of learning activities, 41 per cent of the students preferred a combination of lectures, class activities, group activities, games and quizzes. In terms of the course content, 40 per cent of the students preferred that the course focused more on food selection, nutrition, and on healthy diets. 35 per cent of the students took surveys regarding their satisfaction in the course.

2. As a result of the inclusion of learning activities for students in the "Life to Stop Obesity" course, the mark scheme was changed from the 50:50 format – where 50 per cent of the mark came from a mid-term examination, and the other 50 per cent from a final examination – to a 30:30:40 format. In the latter, the final exam yielded 30 per cent of the overall mark, individual projects yielded another 30 per cent, and quizzes yielded the remaining 40 per cent.

3. In terms of practical implementation of the designed learning activities, highly positive feedback was received, judging from the fact that the course was registered for to its full capacity.

Keywords: Technique, Life to Stop Obesity, General education

INTRODUCTION

The General Education Program is a part of a bachelor's degree program that focuses on the subject of humanities, providing its students with broad general knowledge, making them understand and value themselves, others, societies, arts, cultures, and nature, aware of changes in their surroundings, continuously strive for self-betterment, live by the principles of ethics, ready to help others, and be valuable citizens of both the Thai and global society. According to these goals, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University recognizes the importance of development of teaching and of modernizing its curricula so they would be more relevant to today's environment, and to be more in accordance with the philosophy, identity, and missions of the University. The University thus assigns the Office of General Education and Innovative Electronic Learning with the task of developing the General Education courses for the academic year 2019, so the courses would fulfil the goals listed above, as well as Thailand Qualification Framework for Higher Education B.E. 2552 (2009), the University's policies, and the philosophy of the General Education courses. The revised courses should focus on developing basic skills and on building its students into good role models of their societies.

1. The author – as the teaching assistant of the Life to Stop Obesity course – together with the course's teaching professor, recognize the importance of good learning activity designs. We agree that learning activities should be designed in ways that align with the needs of the students in the Life to Stop Obesity course and of other related parties.

2. The revised course outline of the academic year 2019 aims to improve the learning outcome, as well as provide a record that could be systematically stored and distributed in writing.

3. The online format of the GEN0315 course is an educational innovation that can transform the learning experience of students. It uses of new technology, e.g., the Streamyard platform, to facilitate the learning process, and enable remote learning, through a web site.

4. Online learning combines the use of internet and computer with new technology, to create an effective learning medium. It eliminates commutes and provides an easy-to-access platform which is available at any time, enabling people's life-long learning. This study aims to examine the current state, problems, and needs for learning activities of students registered for the Life to Stop Obesity course. The evaluation of the learning activities for students registered for the Life to Stop Obesity course, which have been designed and implemented since the academic year 2019, constitute the descriptive research presented here. The teaching professor, teaching assistance, and students registered for the course in the academic year 2021 provided the feedback used for the evaluation purpose of this study.

OBJECTIVES

1. The convenience of the students took priority. The online course opened 24 h every day, and the students could be anyone, studied from anywhere and in any time.

2. Different media were used on the web site, including text, images, animations, audio records, and videos, to better engage the audience and communicate the course contents.

3. Students could select subjects they wished to study.

4. Course contents on the web site contained links to external sources of information, widening the scope of and providing more details on the subjects.

METHOD

Population and Sample

The sample consisted of 400 undergraduate students registered for the general education courses.

Data Collection

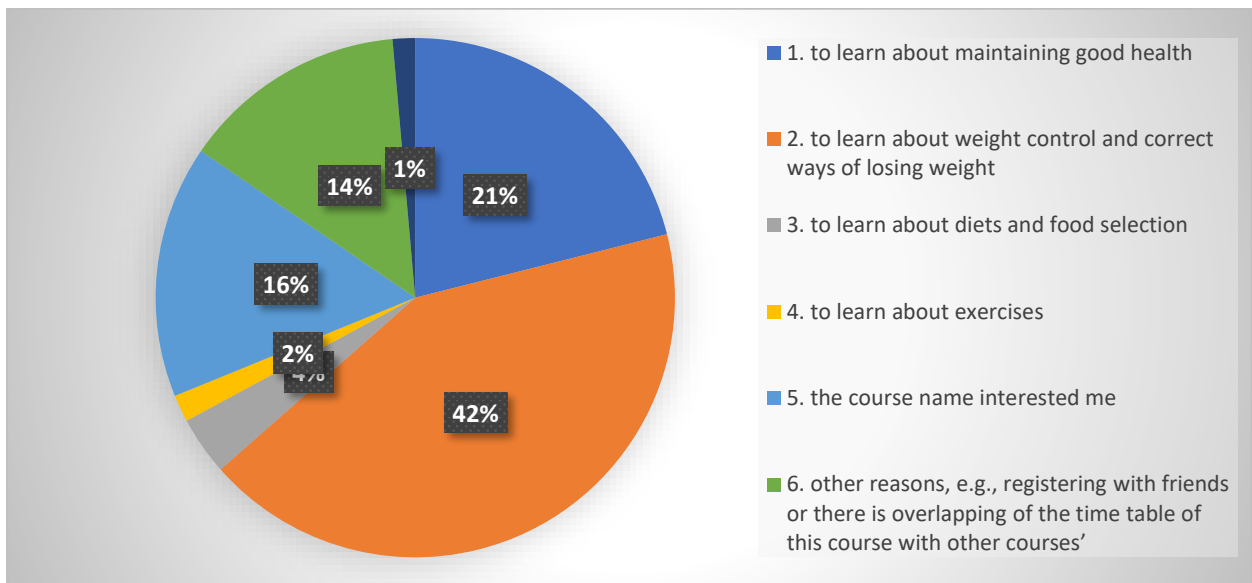
Questionnaires were used to survey the student satisfaction in their online learning experience of the GEN0315 Life to Stop Obesity course. The questionnaires were distributed online via Google Form.

RESULTS

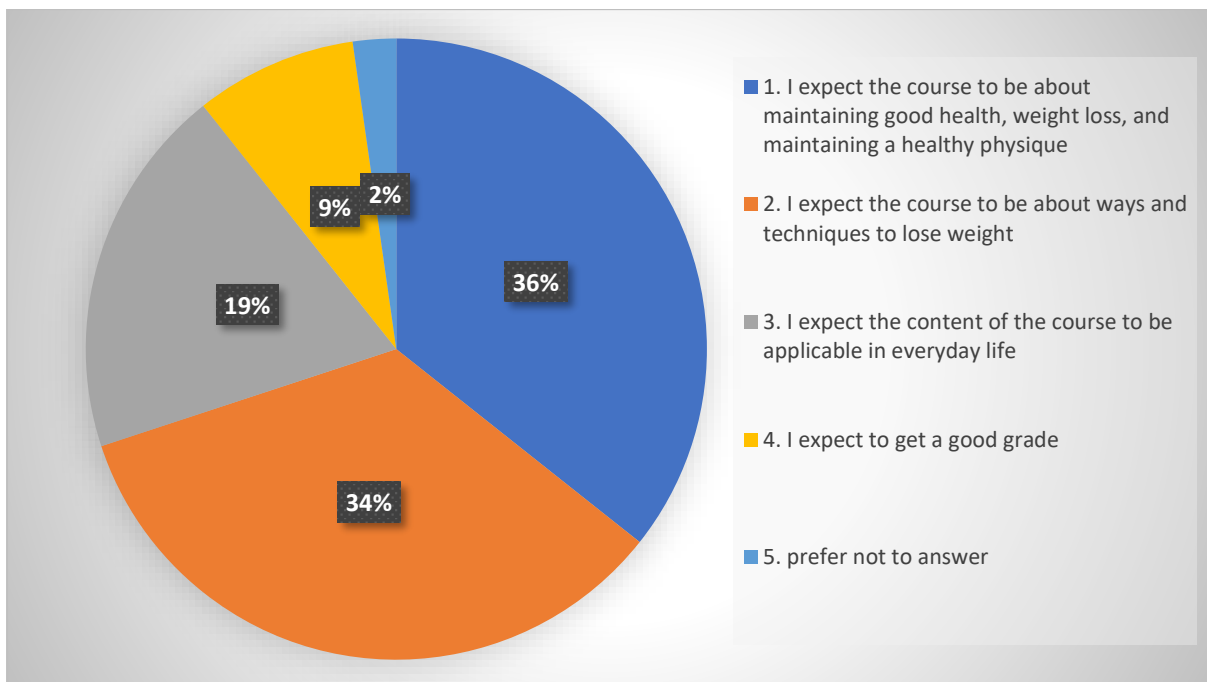
In terms of the organization of the teaching and the management of the courses, improvements could be made to increase the quality of the general education courses, making them align with the specified scopes and directions of the courses, and making them more applicable and relevant to practical uses of the students. The author recognized the importance of the study of the current state, problems, and needs for learning activities for students registered for the GEN0315 Life to Stop Obesity course, of organizing learning activities that could be adapted for practical uses in everyday life, and of evaluating the student satisfaction in the learning activities in the Life to Stop Obesity course. We thus aimed to maximize the effectiveness of the study, to make the Life to Stop Obesity course best aligned with the course description, and to align its learning objectives with the context of the students in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Summary of the answers to the questionnaires completed prior to the commencement of the Life to Stop Obesity course: 356 students completed the questionnaires, giving the following answers:

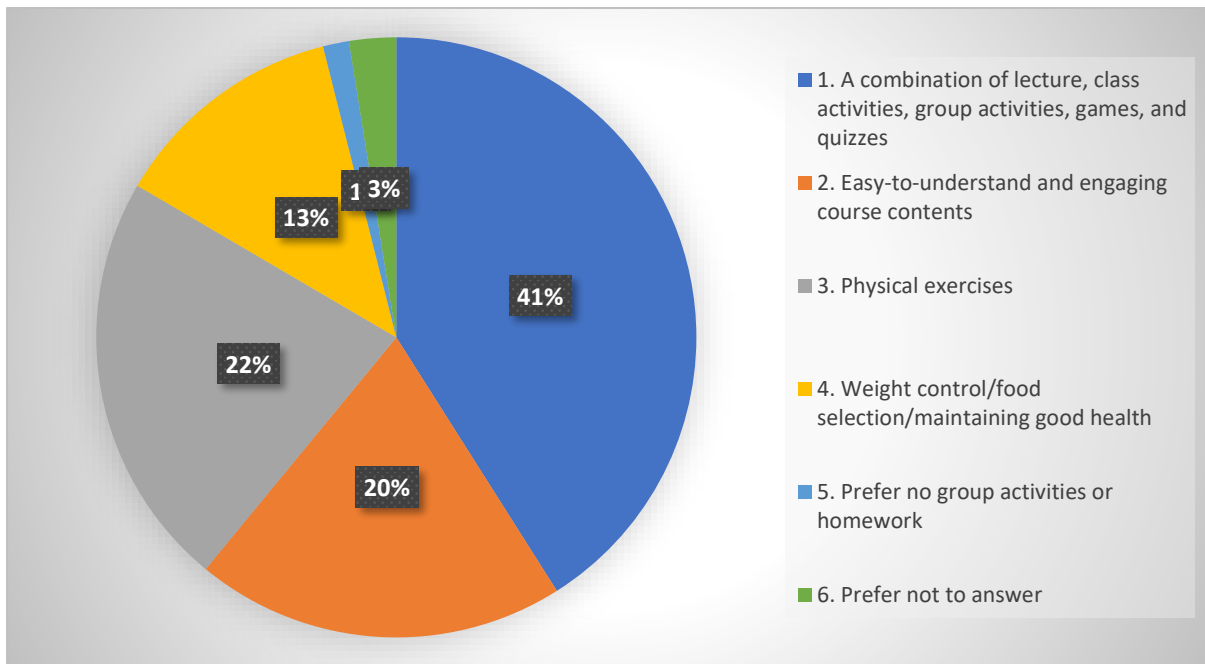
Q1. Why did you register for the Life to Stop Obesity course?



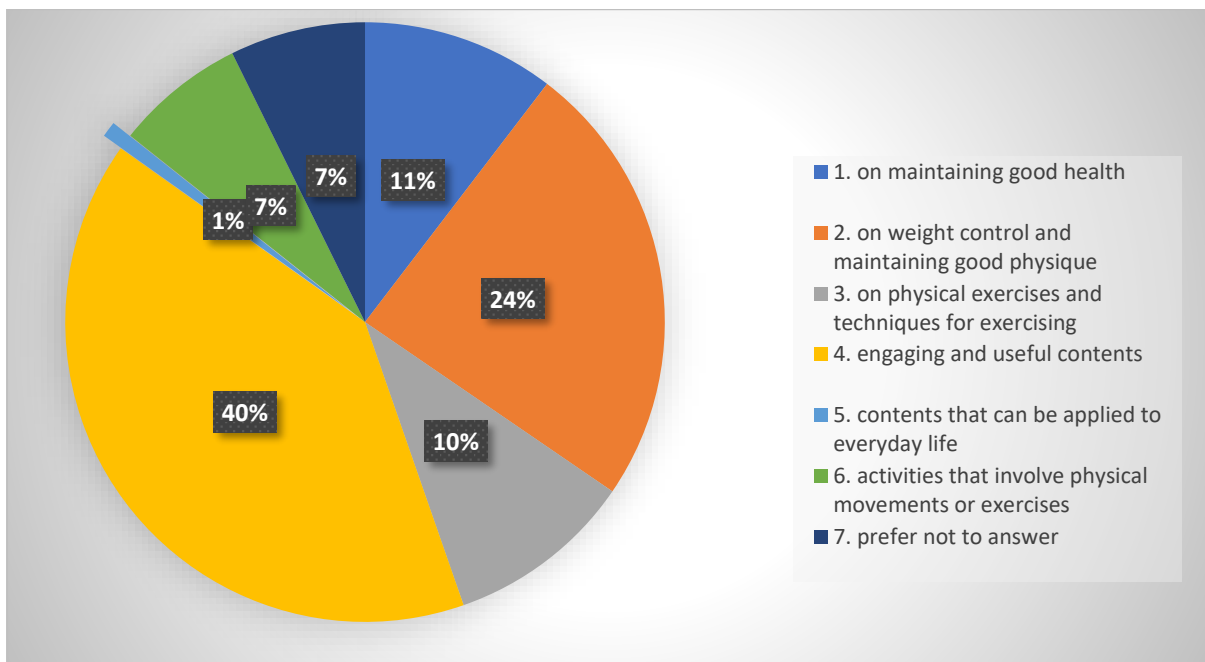
Q2. What are your expectations regarding the teaching in the general education course?



Q3. What are your preference on the types of class activities for the Life to Stop Obesity course?



Q4. What are the topics you wish the Life to Stop Obesity course would emphasize?



The questionnaire about student satisfaction were distributed via Google Form and were answered by 400 students. Their results are summarized below.

DISCUSSION

In the study of the current state, problems, and needs for learning activities for students registered for the Life to Stop Obesity course, 42 per cent of the students stated that their reason for registering was to learn about maintaining good health, and 21 per cent stated that their reason was to learn about weight control and correct ways of losing weight. In terms of the student expectations, 36 per cent expected the course to be about maintaining good health, weight loss, and maintaining a healthy physique, and 34 per cent expected the course to be about ways and techniques to lose weight. 41 per cent of the students preferred that the instructors delivered the course as a combination of lectures, class activities, group activities, games, and quizzes. In terms of the content the students preferred to be emphasized, 40 per cent of the student preferred an emphasis on food selection, nutrition, and on healthy diets. 35 per cent of the students completed questionnaires on their satisfaction.

As a result of the implementation of the learning activities for students in the Life to Stop Obesity course, the course's mark scheme was changed from the original 50:50 format – where 50 per cent of the mark came from a mid-term examination, and the other 50 per cent from a final examination – to a new format. In the latter, the final exam yielded 30 per cent of the overall mark, individual projects yielded another 30 per cent, and quizzes yielded the remaining 40 per cent.

Highly positive feedback was received after the implementation of the designed learning activities for the Life to Stop Obesity course. This was implied by the number of students registered for the course. The course was registered for to its full capacity.

Aspect of student satisfaction	Percentage
In procedures and services	88.80
In service personnel	89.60
In facilities	85.20
In course content	87.60
In the applicability	98.20
In presentation	98.00
In adoptability for practical uses	98.20
In announcements and communications	96.40
Total	35.33

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results and review of related literature, we made the following recommendations:

1. In the study on the current state, problems, and need for learning activities for student registered for the Life to Stop Obesity course, opinions, expectations, understanding of the course contents, and learning outcomes of the students were surveyed. These information would help the teaching professor design learning activities that fulfil the needs of the students, and adapt the activities to suit the context of different groups of students during their studies.

2. The online format of the GEN0315 Life to Stop Obesity course, which allowed students to take their class from anywhere and anytime, could be a factor contributing to the student satisfaction. This was implied by the students' answers to the questions regarding student satisfaction in the questionnaires, and by their collaboration in taking the survey throughout the semester.

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