# *The Readiness of Philippine Schools for the MATATAG Curriculum in Preparing Future Food and Nutrition Professionals*

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Curriculum reforms often show what a country wants its schools to focus on. In the Philippines, the new MATATAG Curriculum reflects this shift. It aims to make lessons simpler, focus on reading, math, and life skills, and make learning more useful for real-life situations (Department of Education, 2023; Hernando-Malipot, 2023). However, as schools start using this curriculum, an important question needs to be asked: Are schools ready to help students who want to take college courses like Food Technology and Nutrition & Dietetics? If teachers, classrooms, and materials are not ready, this program may not achieve its full purpose.

Students who want to study food and nutrition need a strong background in science, especially biology, chemistry, health, and food systems. Salac and Gochuico (2022) explained that while the spiral method (repeating topics at deeper levels) can prevent overload, it may also lead to shallow learning in key science areas. This could leave students unprepared for college subjects like food chemistry or human nutrition. Although the MATATAG Curriculum includes some lessons on health and nutrition (Endozo & Tubera, n.d.), these are not always detailed enough to build a strong foundation.

Teacher readiness is another key factor. In Cavite, Bayot (2025) found that teachers felt only moderately ready to use the new curriculum. Many lacked trainings and had large class sizes. Gutierrez (2024) also found that teachers in Calabarzon had limited experience with real-life food science lessons, like nutrition experiments or lab skills. For students to really learn these topics, teachers need to know how to guide hands-on activities and analyze food and nutrition data. Training programs, created together with experts from colleges or the industry, can help teachers gain these skills.

Aside from trained teachers, schools also need proper equipment and learning spaces. In Cagayan, Ubias (2024) found that while schools were ready in digital and life skills, many lacked proper laboratories. The Research Institute for Teacher Quality (2024) also reported that access to facilities, especially for agriculture and food tech, was not equal in all schools. If students do not get to use real tools like kitchen labs, measuring equipment, or hygiene kits, they may struggle when they enter senior high or college.

The good news is that MATATAG encourages activity-based learning. For example, in Grade 7, students learn about healthy eating and keep nutrition logs (Endozo & Tubera, n.d.). These can be expanded into more specific lessons about food science, meal planning, or kitchen safety. But without clear goals or added topics related to food and nutrition, students may only learn the basics. Tyler (1949) emphasized that good curriculum should always match what students are expected to achieve. Schools should be given optional topics or sample lessons that focus on food systems and nutrition science.

Both Ubias (2024) and Bayot (2025) agree that strong school support is important. This includes help from administrators, teamwork among teachers, and flexible school policies. Schools should also build partnerships with colleges and technical groups like TESDA. These partners can offer guest lectures, give access to labs, or provide mentoring (MS Nutrition, UP–Diliman, n.d.). These programs will help students understand what to expect in college or in jobs related to food and nutrition.

If MATATAG wants to truly prepare students for college programs in Food Technology and Nutrition & Dietetics, it needs more than a good plan. Schools must improve their science teaching, upgrade facilities, and work closely with universities and industries.

To conclude, the MATATAG Curriculum provides a strong starting point. But if we want students to succeed in food-related careers, schools must be fully prepared with well-trained teachers, working equipment, and lessons that match what students need to know in the future. MATATAG should not just be a policy, it should become a real tool for building knowledge, skills, and purpose in every student's learning journey.

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