Theme-based language instruction attempts to integrate language and content. This book exemplifies this type of teaching because it aims to provide medical and nursing students with reading materials and activities which will contribute to contextualize the functional use of the language of medical science thus satisfying needs and interests.

This book includes ten different topics which range from the study of ancient and classical medicine to those recent medical challenges for the future. Two different sections can be distinguished clearly. The first five units focus on the analysis of the development of Health Sciences from a historical-sociological perspective, whereas chapters six to ten concentrate on recent medical contributions in the fields of dentistry, mental health, pharmacology and nutrition.

The first unit introduces ESP students to the traceable origins of medicine in the ancient and classical world, analysing, through different texts, the most significant medical contributions of the Greeks, Romans and Arabians. Unit two focuses on the developments or advances in medicine in the Renaissance, on the exploration into new fields of thought and action. The rise of scientific medicine in the 18th century is dealt with in the following unit in which the influence of the Industrial Revolution on living and working conditions at that time is analysed and also those medical changes brought about by the French Revolution. In the following unit, unit four, students will examine the development of medicine in the 19th century, the significant medical contributions of Koch and Pasteur, the discovery of new diseases such as cholera, the early advances in anesthesia,… Unit five focuses mainly on the topic of 20th century medicine, highlighting the discovery of penicillin by Fleming, the influence of the X-ray as an important contribution from physics, the different advances in endocrinology and the development of surgery as a result of the World Wars.
The following section of the book deals with significant innovations in pharmacology, developments in mental health, in dentistry and nutrition. As regards the development of pharmacology, students analyse in unit six, through diverse texts, the emergence of pharmaceutical practice from the use of 18th century recipes and remedies to chemotherapy. Special attention is given to the field of psychiatry in the following unit in which ESP students will examine the developments in mental health from neurophysiology to psychoanalysis, the classification and the treatment of mental disorders over the centuries, speech disorders and the causes of depression. Unit eight focuses mainly on the development of dentistry from the Classical World, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance up to the present time. Here students will revise traditional remedies for toothaches, formulas for dentifrices, the formation of the teeth, the introduction of anesthetics, oral diseases and oral surgery, dental caries and recent developments in orthodontics, endodontics and implant dentistry. The topic of nutrition is dealt with through texts in unit nine in which students will be able to reflect on the following issues: the discovery of vitamins and of their effects on growth, types of malnutrition, synthetic foods, innovations in diet, sugar consumption and artificial sweeteners like saccharin, research into food chemistry and alternative (synthetic) foods. In the last unit, the author attempts to throw some light on future medical challenges: AIDS research, prevention of cancer, elderly people’s diseases like Alzheimer and Parkinson, new challenges for microbiology, hormones against obesity and High-Technology medicine like laser surgery.

The analysis of the different texts guarantees the acquisition of specialised vocabulary related to the field of medicine. Useful opportunities for discussion are provided through reading texts which will reinforce the development of their communicative competence in the language of the field of medicine.

Through reading these texts, medical and nursing students can develop vocabulary building skills, information transfer skills, comprehension skills, inquiry skills, scanning skills, note-taking skills, summarizing skills, critical thinking skills, cloze skills (through information gaps activity), problem-solving skills and recall skills.

As regards vocabulary skills, word formation activities are developed in each unit so as to guarantee the acquisition of the specialised lexis. Word formation deserves a special attention in this book because this enables students to acquire the different rules of lexical formation. At the same time, the development of debating skills is
guaranteed through class discussions or debates. The different texts provide students with real opportunities for oral communication, particularly for expressing conditions, cause-effect relationships,...

This book facilitates the development and integration of language skills. It is an innovative and highly useful handbook, indispensable to any medical and nursing student.

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