

## Building Health Literacy Assessment and Communication Skills: A DNP Curricular Thread

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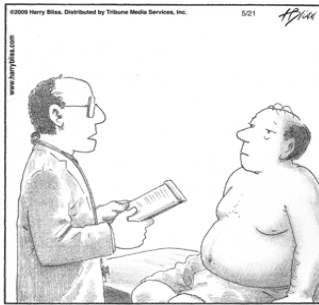
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"Well, yes, I suppose I could explain the test results in 'plain English' — but then you'd know how sick you are."

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## Health Literacy-Definition

- “The ability to *read, understand* and *act* on health information”
- Alternatively: “Health literacy is the degree to which individuals can obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.”

1. National Library of Medicine  
2. Partnership for Clear Health Communication Ratzen & Parker, 2000. Used IOM Report , 2004.

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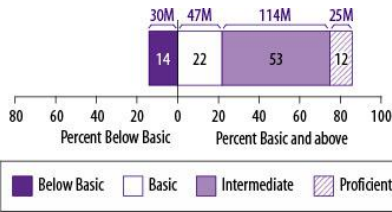
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### National Assessment of Adult Literacy 2003: Health Literacy Component



Information from the National Assessment of Literacy 2003.  
Downloaded 1/3/08 from <http://nces.ed.gov/naal/index.asp>

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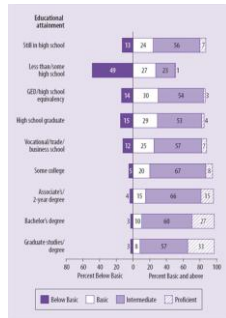
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### National Assessment of Adult Literacy 2003: Health Literacy Component




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### Factors Affecting Health Literacy

- Individual and systemic factors include:
  - Communication skills of lay persons and professionals (participants)
  - Knowledge of participants
  - Culture of participants
  - Demands of health care & public health systems
  - Demands of the situation
  - Patient disabilities

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### Literacy Types and Health Literacy

- Health literacy is a combination of the following:
  - Fundamental literacy
  - Scientific literacy
  - Civic literacy
  - Cultural literacy

HRSA-Unified Health Communication: Addressing Health Literacy, Cultural Competency and Limited English Proficiency: Part 2 Page 21. Downloaded 1/2/08 from <https://www.train.org/DesktopShell.aspx>



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### Poor Fundamental Health Literacy

- GNINAEELC—Ot erussa hgiH eCnamroFrep, yllacidoirep naelc eht ePat sdaeh dna natspac revenehw uoy eciton na noitalumucca fo tsud dna nworb-der edixo selcitraP.

HRSA-Unified Health Communication: Addressing Health Literacy, Cultural Competency and Limited English Proficiency: Part 2 Page 23 Downloaded 1/2/08 <https://www.train.org/DesktopShell.aspx>



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### Adverse Effects of Low Health Literacy

- Affects 90 million Americans, majority native born
- Poor health literacy decreases the quality of health care.
- Increased costs of poor health literacy: \$50-73 Billion per year
- Stories

\*From IOM. *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century*. 2001. & Weiss. *Manual for Clinicians*, 2007



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### Many Patients Could Not Perform These Reading Tasks

	<u>Incorrect</u>
➤ Taking Medication on an empty stomach	42%
➤ When is your next appointment?	26%
➤ Interpret Rx label warnings	78%
➤ Medicaid Rights and Responsibilities Form	86%

Weiss. Manual for Clinicians, 2007

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### What can we do about Low Health Literacy?

- As individual providers & healthcare workers:
  - Work as a care team, from reception area to checkout, to creating a shame free environment & identifying patients who have by health literacy issues.
  - Every visit is a chance to increase the patient's health literacy
- As creators of health care information sources
  - handouts, articles, other media use plain language
- As teachers of future health care providers

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### Health Literacy Teaching Tool




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### Building a Health Literacy Curricular Thread

- **Advanced Health Assessment Course**
  - Health literacy introductory module
    - Define health literacy.
    - Describe the impact of health literacy on health outcomes and health care behavior.
    - Describe effective tools for assessing health literacy in primary care.
    - Discuss effective communication strategies for working with low health literacy patients.

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### Building a Health Literacy Curricular Thread

- **Progression through DNP Clinical Seminar Series**
  - Health Promotion
  - Acute problems
  - Gender based care
  - Chronic disease
  - Chronic disease—complex care
  - Systems approach to care

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### Building a Health Literacy Curricular Thread

- **Clinical Competency**
  - Self assessment on Chart Note Review Form
  - Skill development over time
    - Knowledge/awareness→
    - assessment→
    - communication skill development→
    - systems approach

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### Building a Health Literacy Curricular Thread

- **Simple to Complex**
  - Skill building over time
  - Challenging students to communicate increasingly complex information over time
  - System priorities and policy change

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### Methods for teaching communication skills

- **Clinical case studies**
  - Use of plain language
  - Probing for understanding
  - Teach-back techniques
  - Limiting information to 2-3 important points
  - Using drawings or models to demonstrate
  - Patient decision-support aids

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### Methods for teaching communication skills

- **Clinical Case Studies**
  - Specific questions on health literacy assessment and/or appropriate communication skill to be used in scenario.
  - Students prepare case ahead and discuss in seminar.
- **Clinical Vignettes**
  - Designed to practice health literacy skills in patient context.
  - Groups of 3 students: 1 to play patient, 1 to play provider, and 1 to give feedback. Switch roles.
- **Group Case Studies**
  - Work in groups of 3 students on a leadership case, taking a systems approach to chronic disease care, including approach to health literacy.

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### Methods for teaching communication skills

- **Use of video clips**
  - Patient-provider interactions
  - Discussion of effective communication techniques

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### Methods for teaching communication skills

- **Final seminar**
  - Health literacy system priorities
  - Policy changes
  - Population focus

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### Future Ideas

- Teach students to assess readability level of written materials for patients.
- Use Standardized Patients to teach low-literacy communication skills and/or evaluate student progress in skill development.

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Questions?

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