



Using Lexiles and Universal Design for Learning to Create Client Education Materials

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Introduction

Occupational therapy practitioners (OTPs) work with clients facing communication and participation challenges. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and Lexile text-analysis tools can help clients navigate situations where effective communication is essential.

UDL addresses inclusive educational material development and application in an instructional environment, whereas Universal Design (UD) is an overarching framework for ensuring inclusive access to physical environments and technology products.¹

Lexile Analyzer is a free web-based tool OTPs can use to adjust reading materials to their client's comprehension level.² An understanding of reading levels, and how to adjust, can assist OTPs to directly impact client communication and participation.

Increasing awareness of factors influencing participation promotes health, wellness, and engagement for all people.^{3,4}

What Guides Us

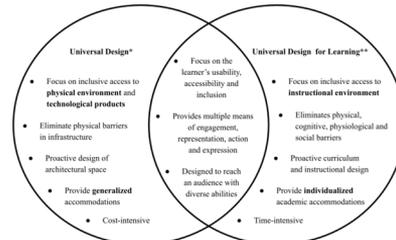
- Meeting clients at an individual level, improving confidence, and prompting self-representation.
- Providing practical ways for OTPs to incorporate UDL and text analysis into therapeutic practice.
- Integrating UDL and text levels to promote exposure, problem-solving, and participation.

Acknowledgements

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What We Do: Tools, Activities, and Examples

Lexile® measurement	Prompt by level
1010L-1200L	Imagine yourself going to a restaurant that you have never been to. You think about many things before you arrive, like walking through the parking lot with your friends, entering the place, and then finding a table or ordering food at the counter. You might be thinking about what the bathrooms are like, if there is a drinking fountain, and anything else that restaurant might have, like a game area or a TV. Consider all these things, and write about what would be real factors in whether or not you would select a place like this as where you want to hang out. Would there be sensory factors? Would there be things related to communicating with friends, customers, or employees? Would there be social factors like knowing what to do and how to act? Write your thoughts here:
410L-600L	You want to go to a restaurant you have not been to before. You know your friends hang out there Friday nights, and you want to join them. What kind of things will you see, hear, and smell? How will you know what to do to order your food? Will there be signs and people you can ask for help? How will you know? Who will you talk to, and what will it be like to be with other people there?
210L-400L:	Do you eat in places you have never been? What do you think about when you go to a new place? Getting there? The food? The bathroom? Other people? Talk about these things. <i>(Word and picture choices may help the client select a response if writing, keyboarding, or dictation is not possible.)</i>
Complex Visual Supports: Sequence of events in a story - SymbolStix PRIME®	
Simple Visual Supports: Emphasizing significant elements - SymbolStix PRIME®	



PhotoVoice: Students can also take photos as a way to reflect, share, and record their sensory, communication, and social experiences.

Options and Outcomes

- Incorporating UDL-designed supports in clinical, educational, and community settings enables more inclusive participation for all people.³
- Signposting is the practice of encouraging uniformity across environments with symbol sets.⁵
- Providing visual supports in mainstream settings promotes immersion in the environment, leading to greater independence.⁶
- Advocating for accessibility for everyone by embracing differences, encouraging access and equity, rather than making changes for a small number of people, highlighting differences.⁷

Our Participation Project

- Individuals with ASD are included in the research process to provide insight on factors impacting them.
- Using UDL concepts and Lexile text analysis, we designed a curriculum promoting self-awareness of individual factors leading to self-care and self-advocacy, encouraging confidence, and improving community participation for individuals with ASD.
- Community partners gain understanding of factors influencing people with ASD to support social participation, improving accessibility and attendance.
- Develop a replicable tool for consistent autism-friendly environments in multiple venues and events.

References



Video Presentation



Transcript