

PH 210 Health Literacy: can the public be healthy without it?

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(Students -this is a DRAFT and invariably, over the course of the semester, it will change. The topics and dates will not change, but readings and assignments will from time to time. All changes will be posted to the website at least a week in advance and you will receive a class email as well). Hope you enjoy the ride!

Class 1 (Jan. 4) Introduction:
HEALTH LITERACY: WHY IS IT A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?
Can we be healthy without it?

The consequences of low health literacy
 What does hard-to-understand health information look like?
 The growing complexity of medicine
 The relationship between health and literacy
 Many Americans are low literate
 Literacy problems among minorities in the USA
 What are the barriers to health literacy?
 Why is literacy so important to health promotion: understanding its individual and societal power?
 Some characteristics of people as language users

- Course Mechanics
- Preliminary discussion of Midterm (Due Feb 22) and Final

Assignment for next class:

Take a portion of language (print/oral transcript) from some form of health communication and make a list of what you think an “average” adult consumer/patient needs to know to understand this message.
 (Be prepared to “show and tell” in class.)

AMA video on Health Literacy - Please review entire 17 minutes @ <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/8035.html>

Readings due for next week :

Zarcadoolas, Pleasant & Greer. Chp 1-3

Davis, T., Crouch, M., Wills, G., Miller, S., & Abdehou, D. (1990). Gap between patient reading comprehension and the readability of patient education materials. *Journal of Family Practice*, 31(5), 533-538.

Gazmararian, J. A. (1999). Health literacy among Medicare enrollees in a managed care organization. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 281, 545-551.

Schillinger, D., Grumbach, K., Piette, J., Wang, F., Osmond, D., Daher, C., Palacios, J., Sullivan, G. D., & Bindman, A. B. (2002). Association of health literacy with diabetes outcomes. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 288, 475-482.

Williams, M. V., Baker, D. W., Parker, R. M., & Nurss, J. R. (1998). Relationship of functional health literacy to patient's knowledge of their chronic disease: A study

of patients with hypertension or diabetes. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 158, 166-172.

Fadiman, A. (1998) *The spirit catches you and you fall down*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Chapters 3, 6, 7, and 18.

Class 2 (Jan. 11) DEFINING HEALTH LITERACY

Health Literacy – Making health sustainable

There are many types of literacy at work in health literacy

Definitions: Health Communication/Health Promotion/Health Literacy

The Nature of Medical Information

Complexity of health information and materials

Health information in languages other than English

A Multi-Dimensional Model of Health Literacy

 Fundamental literacy

 Scientific literacy

 Civic literacy

 Cultural literacy

The Evolving Field of Health Literacy

Getting Here From There: Historical Considerations

A Brief History: How did we get to health literacy?

Tuberculosis: The earliest public education effort in the U.S.

The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis March of Dimes

Targeting Audiences - Tailoring Messages

1960s - 1970s - Social Movements and Advocacy

1980s and 1990s

Models of Behavior Change

Managed Care and Health Insurance

The 21st Century

Literacy and Health

Assignment for next class:

Please watch "An Inconvenient Truth" - Al Gore Film on Global Warming (2006) One copy is on reserve in Levy Library.

Identify a complex concept he introduces in the film and name the specific communication strategies Gore uses to make the concept understandable to the lay audience.

Review the U.S. National Assessment of Adult Literacy data (and the health literacy component) available via: <http://nces.ed.gov/NAAL>

Readings due for today:

Zarcadoolas, Pleasant & Greer, Chp 4., and Chp. 8 Anthrax

Draft E. Harlem Study pdf

Rudd, R. E. (2002). A maturing partnership. *Focus on Basics*, 5(c), 1-8.

Sondra Cuban (2006) "Health Literacy as Commodity" *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, Vol 4, No 2, Nov.

<http://www.jceps.com/?pageID=article&articleID=7>

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2003). *Literacy as freedom: A UNESCO roundtable* [Electronic version]. Paris: Literacy and non-formal education section, Division of Basic Education, UNESCO. Retrieved Sept. 10, 2005, from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001318/131823e.pdf>

Doak, Doak & Root (1985) Teaching patients with low literacy skills. Philadelphia, PA:Lippincott. Chapters 6 and 7 available at:
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/doak6.pdf>
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/doak7.pdf>

Taubes, G. (2007). Do we really know what makes us healthy? The New York Times, Sunday Magazine. Sept. 17, 2006.

Class 3 (Jan. 18) LITERACY AT WORK

How Language Works- a glimpse into this extraordinary human ability.

Linguistics 101

Implications for spoken and written health messages

The Prophecy (or promise) of Health Literacy: “simplify and they will come”

A message does not communication make

Introduction to conducting a health literacy load analysis: how to analyze a text (written/spoken/visual)

Frames

People are meaning makers

Reading

You can make meaning out of the strangest things

What makes a text readable / understandable?

Vocabulary

Sentence Complexity

Cohesion

Relevance / Context

Spoken Language

Talk is like a ball game

Print is more than speech written down

IN CLASS REVIEW <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/>

In Class Example: East Harlem GIS Study

Discussion of Midterm and Final

Readings due for next class:

Pleasant, A., Zarcadoolas, C., Greer, D (manuscript) “Addressing the Measurement Issue: A conceptual Framework for a New Measure of Health Literacy.”

- Baker, David W. (2006). The Meaning and Measure of Health Literacy *J Gen Intern Med* 21:878-883.
- Chew,LD, Bradley, K., Boyko, E. (2004) Brief Questions to Identify Patients With Inadequate Health Literacy. *Family Medicine* 36(8):588-94.
- Weiss, BD., Mays, M.Z., Castro, KM., DeWalt, DA. Pignone, MP.,Mockbee,J., Hale, FA., (2005). Quick Assessment of Literacy in Primary Care: The Newest Vital Sign. *Annals of Family Medicine* Vol.3, No.6 514-522.
- Parker, R. M., Baker, D. W., Williams, M. V., & Nurss, J. R. (1995). The test of functional health literacy in adults: a new instrument for measuring patients' literacy skills. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 10(10), 537-541.
- WallaceLS.,Rogers ES., Rockos SE., Holiday DB.,Weis BD., (2006). Brief Report: Screening items to identify Patients with Limited Health Literacy Skills. *J Gen Intern Med*. 21:874-877.

Class 4 (Jan. 25) How Can We Measure Health Literacy?

Guest Speak Dr. Andrew Pleasant, Assistant Professor, Dept. Human Ecology, Rutgers.

The limitations of current measurement

What other fields and models can tell us about measuring health literacy.

Readings due for next class:

Zarcadoolas, et al., Chp. 5

Chapters 1 & 2 – Atkin, C. & Wallack, L. (Eds.) (2004) *Mass Communication and Public Health*, Thousand Oaks, CA:Sage Publications

Assignment for next class (from earlier assignment)

Choose a health literacy ad or public health message and conduct a preliminary health literacy load analysis. Does one domain – fundamental, science, civic or cultural dominate? What domains of health literacy does the message assume the consumer/patients has? How likely is this? How is the message framed? What are the fundamental literacy demands (reading or oral language?) What science is required or assumed. What civic understanding? Cultural? Be prepared to discuss your text analysis in class.

Class 5 (Feb. 1) Mass Media

Introduction to Mass Media

Characteristics of the mass media

Media Content: Challenges and Opportunities to Advance Health Literacy

Entertainment

News – What is news?

Advertising

Product placement

In class – review of ads (print and TV, web) conducting a health literacy load analysis.

Discuss of your homework assignment.

View excerpts from episode of *CSI Miami* in class. Discuss the “science’ of the show?

Why might less literate (science literate) viewers understand the show? What may not be understood? (I will discuss findings from a recent ethnographic study of *CSI Miami*).

Readings due for next class:

Zarcadoolas, et al., Chapter 6

- Zarcadoolas, C., Blanco, M., Boyer, F., & Pleasant, A. (2002). Unweaving the web: an exploratory study of low-literate adults' navigation skills on the World Wide Web. *Journal of Health Communication*, 7(4), 309-324.
- Zarcadoolas, C., & Blanco, M. (2000). Lost in Translation: Each Word Accurate, Yet... *Managed Care* Vol.9, No.8, August.22A-22F.
- McCray, Alexa T. (2005). Promoting Health Literacy. *J Am Med Inform Assoc*. 2005 Mar-Apr; 12(2):152-163.

Assignment for next class:

MedlinePlus: review a single health topic on MedlinePlus, WebMD and an internet search engine (e.g. Google). Suggested topics: 'lose weight' and 'high cholesterol' depression

Also, look at a drug – compare the information on MedlinePlus and on the drug website (usually at the top of a google search for the drug name).

Be ready to discuss the following:

- Is there any information that is overly prominent? What about ads?
- Is the page easy to read – both with visual layout and reading level?
- What are the health literacy demands (**health literacy load**) of the information?
- Is there any indication of when the page was updated?

CLASS 6 (Feb. 8) HEALTH LITERACY AND THE INTERNET
Guest Lecturer, Levy Library Staff

Internet Use in Healthcare

Who uses the Internet?

What is the internet used for?

Hurricane Katrina: People turn to the internet for help

What health information is on the internet?

WedMD, Medline Plus...

How health information on the internet is interpreted and used.

Opportunities and cautions

Potential disadvantages and barriers to the internet for conveying health-related information

In class review and health literacy load analysis of *Medline Plus*.

Readings due for next class:

Zarcadoolas Chp. 7

Assignment for next class:

Review patient material on Montori website

Choose 1 decision and predict what the health literacy load is – what types of health literacy may be required of the patient.

http://mayoresearch.mayo.edu/mayo/research/ker_unit/

CLASS 7 (Feb. 15) Case Studies (Classes 7-10) & Health Literacy Load Analysis
Case #1 BABY BASICS: A PRENATAL PROGRAM FOCUSING ON DEVELOPING HEALTH LITERACY

Guest Speaker – **Lisa Bernstein**, Executive Director, What to Expect Foundation NYC (to discuss Baby Basics - covered in Case #1).

Healthy Beginnings: Infant and Maternal Health

Problem Identification: Needs assessment research with providers.

The *Baby Basics* Book and Program

Phase 1: Collaboratively Identifying the Need

Description of the *Baby Basics* Book

Phase 2: Field testing with providers and pregnant mothers

Phase 3: Developing best practice guidelines for using *Baby Basics*

Phase 4: *Baby Basics Toolbox for Change*

Evaluation

The *Baby Basics* Program Model

Readings due for next class:

Zarcadoolas et al., Chp. 9

Ratzan, S. C. (2001). Health literacy: communication for the public good. *Health Promotion International*, 16(2), 207-214.

CLASS 8 (Feb. 22) GENOMICS AND HEALTH LITERACY

Midterm Due Today

Case #2 Genomics
Why Genomics?
Understanding and misunderstanding genomics: A review
What is the health literacy load of this information?

Explore the science, civic and cultural issues

Folklore: What causes birth defects and genetic disorders?

The gene: A brief history of metaphors and misunderstandings

The “code” metaphor: An example

How metaphors work: a quick primer

Using metaphors to communicate complex science

The many metaphors of DNA and genes

Mel Gibson in each of our cells?

Probabilities and percents: Problems in communicating genomics and risk

Discussion of how Mount Sinai’s gene bank program may be understood and perceived by Harlem residents.

Readings due for next class

Zarcadoolas et al., Chp. 10

Kawachi, I. (2001) Social capital for health and human development. *Development*, 41(1), 31-35.

Campbell, C., (1999). *Social capital and health*. London: Health Education Authority. Ch. 1: The relevance of social capital to health promotion.

**CLASS 9 (March 1) HIGHLIGHTING THE ROLE OF CIVIC LITERACY:
THE MASSACHUSETTS TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM**

Case #3 Smoking and Health: The Threat

Recognizing Secondhand Smoke
Smoking and health literacy
Civic Literacy
The Tobacco Master Settlement, 1998
The mass media campaign; improving public health literacy
A magic bullet?
Targeting secondhand smoke
Civic action: Mobilizing greater Lawrence, Mass
Calls for action: Youth participation
Wrapping Up
Exercises

Assignment for next class:

Readings due for next class:

Zarcadoolas et al., Chp. 11 and 12.

CLASS 10 (March 8) HIGHLIGHTING CULTURAL LITERACY
Cases #4 THE CHANGING FACE OF HIV/AIDS
Case #5 DIABETES AND NATIVE AMERICANS

What is culture and cultural literacy?
Culture and health
HIV/AIDS: The numbers
HIV/AIDS: The public dialogue
The conflict in communicating about HIV/AIDS
The U.S. government acts: "America Responds to Aids"
Early response at the community level
From minimizing fear to changing behavior: the national strategy shifts
Communicating in a culturally literate way
CDC guidelines
Community Planning: The San Francisco AIDS Foundation

DIABETES AND NATIVE AMERICANS

Culture and health: Diabetes and Native Americans 4Winds Project

Readings due for next class

Zarcadoolas et al., Chp. 13

Nutbeam, D. (2000). Health literacy as a public health goal: a challenge for contemporary health education and communication strategies into the 21st century. *Health Promotion International*, 15(3), 259-267.

Nutbeam, D., & Kickbusch, I. (2000). Advancing health literacy: a global challenge for the 21st century. *Health Promotion International*, 15(3), 183-184.

CLASS 11 (March 15) PROGRAM EVALUATION**Case #6 WORLD EDUCATION'S BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER PROJECT**

World Education's Breast and Cervical Cancer Project

Why evaluate?

Adult basic education and health literacy

Key Points from this Case Study

HEAL:BCC Project Overview

Program Foundations

What is Evaluation?

HEAL:BCC Implementation and Evaluation

Mission Statements and Theory Should Be More than Just Hot Air

Marrying Theory with Practice

Measuring Health Literacy: An Effort in Development

Choosing an Evaluation Design

Types of Research Designs

Quantitative or Qualitative?

Reliability and Validity

CLASS 12 (March 22) Last Class**Presentations**

Final Projects Due March 28