Exploring the Depths of Health Literacy: Are We Teaching This and Why Does It Matter?

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**Exploring the Depths of Health Literacy**

*Are We Teaching This and Why Does It Matter?*

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### Overall Project Objectives

The primary aim of this project was to provide students with a solid foundation for competency in consumer education and promotion of health literacy in older adult consumers.

- Train graduate occupational therapy students in the principles, best practices and evaluation of health literacy education for older adults.
- Provide direct learning opportunities for students to implement research-based educational strategies using virtual world, web-based, print, for health literacy education for older adults.
- Identify ways to enhance existing content and assignments related to health literacy in senior, older adult certificate and specialty courses.

### Best practices for assessment and intervention based on principles of health literacy

- Instruments that assess health literacy in patients/clients
- Effective strategies for assessing health materials and environments
- Strategies for effective health communication
- Methods of empowering clients to navigate challenges in accessing health care resources.

### Applying Health Literacy in Practice

**Patient Level**
- Teach health literacy strategies
- Include health management in Tx
- Minimize information on intake form
- Consider culture; clarify values
- Help client ask questions

**Provider Level**
- Screen for health literacy skills
- Use clear communication strategies
- Use plain language
- Check readability of written materials
- Use teach-back method

**System Level**
- Uses inside support; advocate for policy change
- Partner with outside organizations
- Assess the Environment
- Appeal to the business side of Health Literacy

### Strategies for Teaching Health Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module/Course</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older Adults and Their Living Environments</td>
<td>Present on a topic of interest related to the interface of older adults and their living environments to a group of residents within the virtual world of Second Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry-Level MS-OT</td>
<td>Gather evidence-based resources&lt;br&gt;Apply principles of health literacy&lt;br&gt;Reflect upon the experience and share with other classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Concepts in Dementia Care and Caregiving across Practice Contexts</td>
<td>Develop a preliminary plan for addressing an identified health literacy issue in current work environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012 (Module with 6 students)</td>
<td>Conduct a Health Literacy Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Practice Certificate and Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD)</td>
<td></td>
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