Increasing Lexile Levels to Improve Student Learning

Metro Area Instructional Leadership Conference
School and District Effectiveness Division
Georgia Department of Education

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Strong Students | Strong Schools | Strong Staff | Strong System
Warm-Up and Stretch

- Think of a **skill or activity** in which you have **improved** recently.
- Describe your skills **before and after** your improvement.
- How did you “**measure**” your improvement?

**Reference:** Dr. Rick Dills, *The Lexile Framework for Reading* (presentation)
The Decline of Reading

- One in four secondary students are unable to read and understand textbook content, according to the Alliance for Excellent Education.

- “Today fewer than a third of America’s adolescents meet grade-level expectations for reading. Among low-income students, the number is closer to one in seven” (17).

- 1 out of 3 U.S. high school students drops out. (50% of Latinos and African Americans).

- 3,000 students who are poor readers drop out of school daily (Readicide, Gallagher, 3).

- Less than one out of three college graduates reads at a proficient high school level.

- Half of American adults don’t read themselves or to their children.
Using Chart Paper and Markers...

Make a T-Chart.

- In column A, write the question:
  
  what are we doing to make kids HATE reading?
Read-i-cide

noun, the systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools.
Today’s Outcomes

- Increase understanding of reading practices that will promote reading growth and writing proficiency

- Provide building and district leaders with a framework for using Lexile scores to increase student achievement in literacy.
  - The Lexile Framework
  - Text Complexity
  - Relationship between Lexiles, Reading, Achievement, and CCRPI
  - Teacher Tool Kit
An Age-Old Analogy: Lexiles are like inches...

- A universal, accurate measurement system
- Used to measure a student’s current “size” and growth over time
- Not grade specific - students come in different sizes and grow at different rates

Reference: Dr. Rick Dills, *The Lexile Framework for Reading* (presentation)
The Lexile Framework® for Reading

Allows us to...

- Measure reader ability and text readability with a common metric: Lexiles
- Forecast the level of comprehension a reader is expected to experience with a particular text

Reference: Sharon Gates, Using the Lexile Framework to Support Instruction (Presentation)
Two Underlying Concepts of the Lexile Framework®

- Reader Ability
  - The ability of readers to construct meaning from text (as measured on tests)
- Text Readability
  - The difficulty of reading materials (based on dimensions or characteristics of the text)

Based on the relationship between Reader Ability and Text Readability, it is possible to...
- Predict Reading Comprehension
- Differentiate Instruction
- Measure Reader Progress and Growth

Reference: Sharon Gates, Using the Lexile Framework to Support Instruction (Presentation)
Determining Text Difficulty

- **Syntactic Complexity**
  - The number of words per sentence
  - Longer sentences are more complex and require more short-term memory to process

- **Semantic Difficulty**
  - The frequency of the words in a corpus of written text
  - Corpus has over 600-million words

Reference: Sharon Gates, *Using the Lexile Framework to Support Instruction (Presentation)*
Limitations of Lexile Measures

What Lexiles don’t address

- Text Characteristics
  - Age Appropriateness of Content
  - Text Support
  - Text Quality

- Reader Characteristics
  - Interest and Motivation
  - Background Knowledge
  - Reading Context and Purpose

- Lexiles only measure text readability.

- Therefore, input from readers, parents, teachers, and librarians is always necessary.

What are the three components of the Georgia Standards of Excellence literacy framework needed to determine text complexity?

**Answer:** Qualitative factors, Quantitative factors, and Reader Task Considerations
It’s About More Than Lexiles!

Lexiles would fall under which category: qualitative, quantitative, or reader/task considerations?

**Answer:** Quantitative
It’s About More Than Lexiles!

True or False:
Accelerated Reader is a credible, research based program, proven to increase Lexiles?

True!
True or False: Focusing solely on Lexiles is more than enough to prepare students for the next generation of Georgia assessments.

False!
Take each of the following words and place them into their appropriate place on the Text Complexity placemat.

Example: structure should be placed on the qualitative measures triangle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>word length</th>
<th>word frequency</th>
<th>word difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence length</td>
<td></td>
<td>text length</td>
<td>text cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>levels of meaning</td>
<td></td>
<td>levels of purpose</td>
<td>structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organization</td>
<td></td>
<td>language conventionality</td>
<td>language clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prior knowledge demands</td>
<td></td>
<td>motivation</td>
<td>knowledge and experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purpose for reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>complexity of task assigned regarding text</td>
<td>complexity of questions asked regarding text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLACEMAT ANSWERS!

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

Measures such as:
- Word length
- Word frequency
- Word difficulty
- Sentence length
- Text length
- Text cohesion
Step 2: Qualitative Measures

Measures such as:
- Levels of meaning
- Levels of purpose
- Structure
- Organization
- Language conventionality
- Language clarity
- Prior knowledge demands
Step 3: Reader and Task

Considerations such as:
- Motivation
- Knowledge and experience
- Purpose for reading
- Complexity of task assigned regarding text
- Complexity of questions asked regarding text
How Do I Help Students Access Complex Texts?

Point One:
There is no MAGIC Program!

Point Two:
Reading is not the dominion of English classrooms!
All teachers are teachers of reading. Reading Achievement has to be schoolwide effort!

Point Three:
Use research based strategies that work!
- Incentivize reading for ALL students.
- Give students choice and VOICE in reading selections.
- Employ **Close Reading** in all classrooms!
What Do Good Readers Do?

Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?
by Cris Tovani

Students read deeply and analytically, able to comprehend and make inferences about what they read.

Reference: Daniel Rock, GaDOE, Close Reading Strategies for the CCGPS (Presentation)

They skip, skim, and scan text continually based on their purpose. They also reread, slow down, and reread again if it suits their purpose.

They know a purpose will help them focus their reading and determine what is important. They also know that purpose determines how they read the material.

Good readers approach assigned text with a result in mind. They consider what they have to do with the information after reading.
The Close Reading Process

Students read the text silently. Teacher provides a purpose.

Teacher reads the text aloud/models thinking.

Students read again and annotate/create questions.

High-light unknown/significant words

Students find explicit meaning, inferences, central ideas, and themes

Write/ask questions

Q-Cards

Reference: Daniel Rock, GaDOE, Close Reading Strategies for the CCGPS (Presentation)
How is Georgia using Lexiles?

- Students receive a Lexile measure along with their regular scale score for Georgia Milestone’s EOG and EOC.
- A student’s Lexile measure is a tool for teachers to use in targeting reading material for students.
- A student’s Lexile measure is a tool for parents to use in selecting reading material for their children.
- Instruction in ELA and math will be based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence that promotes literacy in these content areas as well as others.
- Teachers in such areas as social studies and science must also help students develop literacy.

These "stretch" Lexile bands are based on the Common Core State Standards – Appendix A – updated in July 2012. These “stretch” bands reflect the demand of text that students should be reading—and at which grades—to make sure they are ultimately prepared for the reading demands of college and careers.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Band</th>
<th>Current Lexile Band</th>
<th>“Stretch” Lexile Band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>450L-725L</td>
<td>420L-820L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>645L-845L</td>
<td>740L-1010L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>860L-1010L</td>
<td>925L-1185L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>960L-1115L</td>
<td>1050L-1335L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-CCR</td>
<td>1070L-1220L</td>
<td>1185L-1385L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Lexile Scale

- Lexiles typically range from 200 for beginning readers to 1700 for advanced readers.

- Lexile text below 200L represents beginning-reading material, and a student’s Lexile score may have a number in the 100s or the code of BR. BR is a code that stands for Beginning Reading.

- Applies to both reader ability and text difficulty
  - When reader and text measures are the same, the student is expected to read with 75% comprehension.

- Can be used to track reading growth over time.

### Relationship between Time Spent Reading and Reading Achievement

#### Fifth-Grade Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentile Rank</th>
<th>Minutes of Text Reading per Day</th>
<th>Estimated Number of Words Read per Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>4,733,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>2,357,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>1,168,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>601,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>134,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>51,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*from* Anderson et al., 1988, Table 3, N= 155.

**Reference:** Dr. Rick Dills, *The Lexile Framework for Reading* (presentation)
## Typical Lexile Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Typical Growth in One Year</th>
<th>Time Necessary to Observe a “True” Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd-5th</td>
<td>100L</td>
<td>37 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th-7th</td>
<td>70L</td>
<td>55 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th-9th</td>
<td>50L</td>
<td>110 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th-12th</td>
<td>25L</td>
<td>110 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference: Dr. Rick Dills, *The Lexile Framework for Reading* (presentation)
What *all* teachers need...

- Classroom reports of their students’ *Lexile scores*
  - Fall (to profile, group, and match text)
  - Spring (to chart and celebrate growth)
- **Lexile levels for their textbooks** and books in their classrooms and library
- **Access to the Internet and to resources** such as lexile.com, online databases, and other search tools
- **Opportunities to collaborate** and develop tiered reading/resource lists
Using Lexiles in the Classroom

Teachers can use Lexiles to help them:

• Develop individualized or classroom reading lists tailored to provide appropriately challenging reading.

• Enhance thematic teaching by building a bank of titles at varying levels that support the theme, but also allows all students to participate successfully in the theme with material at their own reading level.

• Sequence materials, for example by increasing the difficulty of read-aloud books throughout the year.

What teachers need to know

How to:

- Use Lexiles as a reading measurement system
- Profile students, predict comprehension, and match readers to text
- Access and use online resources
- Develop and use tiered reading/resource lists to support differentiation
- Understand, chart, and explain patterns of Lexile growth
Using Lexiles in the Classroom

Teachers can use Lexiles to help them:

- Develop a reading folder that goes home with students and comes back for weekly review. Folder might contain:
  - a reading list of books within the student’s Lexile range
  - reports of recent assessments
  - a form for parents to record reading that occurs at home.

- Vary reading difficulty of material to the situation:
  - Choose texts lower in the student’s Lexile range when factors make the reading situation more challenging, threatening or unfamiliar.
  - Select texts at or above the student’s range to stimulate growth when a topic is of extreme interest to a student, or when you will be giving additional support such as background teaching or discussion.

More Instructional Uses of Lexiles

Lexiles can help teachers:

- Adjust materials to the purpose of reading.
  - For increased fluency and automaticity, teacher selects text that measures well below reader ability.
  - As a strategy for teaching students how to attack “hard” text, the teacher selects text that measures above reader ability.

More Instructional Uses of Lexiles

• Teachers can use Lexiles to target fiction and non-fiction material to students’ abilities and thus promote learning of all subjects.

  – Avoids student frustration when reading text is too difficult.
  – Avoids undermining student self-confidence.
  – Avoids the fostering of bad work habits and unrealistic self-expectations when a student is always presented with too easy material.
  – Learning occurs best when the text material can be comprehended at a 75% rate.

Why 75% Comprehension?

Years of MM research suggests that at 75%...

- A reader can have a **successful reading experience** without frustration or boredom
- A reader can achieve “**functional comprehension**” of the text
- A reader will be **sufficiently challenged** (by vocabulary and syntax) to improve

*75% is the “right amount of challenge”*
Managing Comprehension

- Readers can experience **frustration** when...
  - Text readability is **100L+ above** their Lexile level
- Readers can experience **ease** when...
  - Text readability is **50-100L below** their Lexile level
- Readers can experience **growth** when...
  - Text readability is **within their Lexile range**

**General Reading Recommendation:**

Targeted text range of **100L below to 50L above** the student’s Lexile level

*Note:* This range may vary based on text type, reading context and purpose, reading strategies and support, and reader motivation.
Using Lexiles to Promote Reading

- Improve students’ reading fluency and increase enjoyment of reading.
  - Students who spend a minimum of 3 hrs/week reading at their own level for their own purposes develop reading fluency which leads to improved mastery.
- It is recommended that readers choose texts within their Lexile range.
  - A Lexile range is 50L above and 100L below a student’s reported Lexile measure.
- Use Lexiles to set goals.
- Practice with a variety of texts.
- Challenge the BEST readers.
- Success breeds enjoyment.
Summer Reading Is Essential!

Research studies show that —

- students can have up to a 2-3 month loss in reading ability over summer.
- lower income students may suffer most due to lack of books in home and transportation access to public libraries.
- rural area students also lack easy access.
- innovative partnering of schools, publishers, and public libraries have great promise for solving the summer reading loss dilemma.

Media specialists and librarians can assist classroom instruction by

- Helping to develop individualized or classroom reading lists tailored to provide appropriately challenging reading.

- Guiding teachers in selecting a bank of titles at varying levels that support an instructional thematic unit. This allows all students to participate successfully in the theme with material at their own reading level.

- Locating and sequencing materials for classroom use. For example, increasing the difficulty of read-aloud books throughout the year.

Source: https://d1jt5u2s0h3gkt.cloudfront.net/m/uploads/downloadablepdfs/Lexiles-in-the-Library.pdf
Our Parents Have a Role to Play

- Promotes family-school connections.
- **Know** your child’s Lexile measure.
- **Know** your child’s Lexile range.
  - 50L above and 100L below their reported Lexile measure. This range represents the boundaries between the easiest kind of reading material for your child and the hardest level at which he/she can read successfully.
- **Use the Lexile Find a Book Database** (at [http://lexile.com/fab/GA](http://lexile.com/fab/GA)) to find books in the child’s Lexile range.

Go back to your table T-Charts.

- In column B, write the question:
  
  what are we doing/going to do to make kids LOVE reading?
Teacher Tools for
*Increasing Lexile Levels to Improve Student Learning*

Accessing the Find a Book Tool
http://lexile.com/fab/GA

Use the Lexile Analyzer – it’s free, but you must register.

Create a text document (file extension is .txt) with multiple 175-word slices from the book or document.

Submit via the Lexile Analyzer.

Also can approximate the Lexile by seeing other books by the same author or in same series.
Lexile Analyzer

Text file

Before the school closed for the last week of June, everyone had decided that the last word each child was to say. All the children and mothers attended the event, but each had their own choice of what they would say. The teachers had planned it well.

On the last day of school, everyone was excited. The children were very happy, and the parents were there too. There were games for the children, and the parents were also invited. The children were very happy and enjoyed the day.

The parents were very happy to see their children having such a great time. They were all very pleased with the way the teachers had planned the event.

Result

Lexile Analyzer

Please be sure to print this information. It will not be stored and may be recorded by analyzing the file again.

Lexile Analyzer Result

Lexile Measure: 970

Click here to analyze another file.