Health literacy is important to understand and consider when presenting or developing materials for an untraditional audience.2 This concept will be significant as I finalize my materials for my Capstone presentation in Guatemala. The greatest challenge I may face regarding health literacy is my lack of fluency in Spanish. Though I am currently enrolled in an introductory Spanish course for health professionals, I still lack the competency to communicate about more advanced topics. However, I hope my audience will appreciate my efforts to speak Spanish for less pertinent information such as salutations. For my presentation, I will utilize a verbal translator to ensure that information is relayed correctly. I will speak clearly and with an appropriate pace such that the translator can easily understand and translate my words into Spanish.3 Additionally, all of my handouts will be translated into Spanish by a reliable resource prior to traveling to Guatemala.

In addition to the language barrier, I must also consider educational differences between American health care providers and Guatemalan clinicians and patients. For this reason, utilizing a lower reading level will be essential to ensuring that both physical therapists and patients are able to understand the materials.2 The average literacy rate among adults in Guatemala is 74% and this percentage drops in rural areas. 1 Though I am in the process of creating materials for my Capstone, my initial handout materials have an average 6.4 Flesch-Kincaid reading level.4 Some of the information is complicated by medical terminology; however, I will include visuals to help clarify concepts.

Aside from presenting my educational handout for patients, I am hoping to also include a more interactive component of my presentation. I am still in the beginning stages of developing an informational lab session where the physical therapists and physical therapy students at Las Obras can work collaboratively. Some preliminary ideas include practicing evaluation techniques, outcome measures, and therapeutic exercises for managing low back pain. I will utilize the same health literacy concepts previously mentioned to help facilitate effective communication and understanding during the lab session. Regardless of the information I decide to present during the lab session, I will demonstrate all activities so that the audience can use visual information to further reinforce concepts.

I will continue to adapt my presentation materials as I prepare for the trip, seeking guidance and feedback from my Capstone advisor and committee members. I have scheduled a timeline in which I hope to have final drafts of my presentation materials completed. Through independent study and my introductory Spanish course for health professionals, I anticipate continuing to learn about the culture of Spanish-speaking countries and how it relates to heath care.

(1) Integral Family Literacy: Guatemala. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [Website]. <http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/?menu=16&programme=94>. Updated February 10, 2012. Accessed March 7, 2016.

(2) Jensen GM, Monstrom E. Handbook of Teaching and Learning Physical Therapy. Third Edition. Chapter 12: Patient Education and Health Literacy.

(3) Plack M, Driscoll M. Teaching and Learning in Physical Therapy From Classroom to Clinic. Chapter 4: Systematic Effective Instruction: Keys to Designing Effective Presentations.

(4) Readability Score. Readbility-Score.com [Website] <https://readability-score.com/>. Accessed March 7, 2016.