

The Role of Digital Technology in Promoting Health Literacy

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FACT 1: Digital Literacy can be tracked and charted for patterns of access and reach by digital technologies.

Digital Literacy

Digital Literacy: the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, understand, evaluate, create, and communicate digital information that requires both cognitive and technical skills (The American Library Association, 2016).

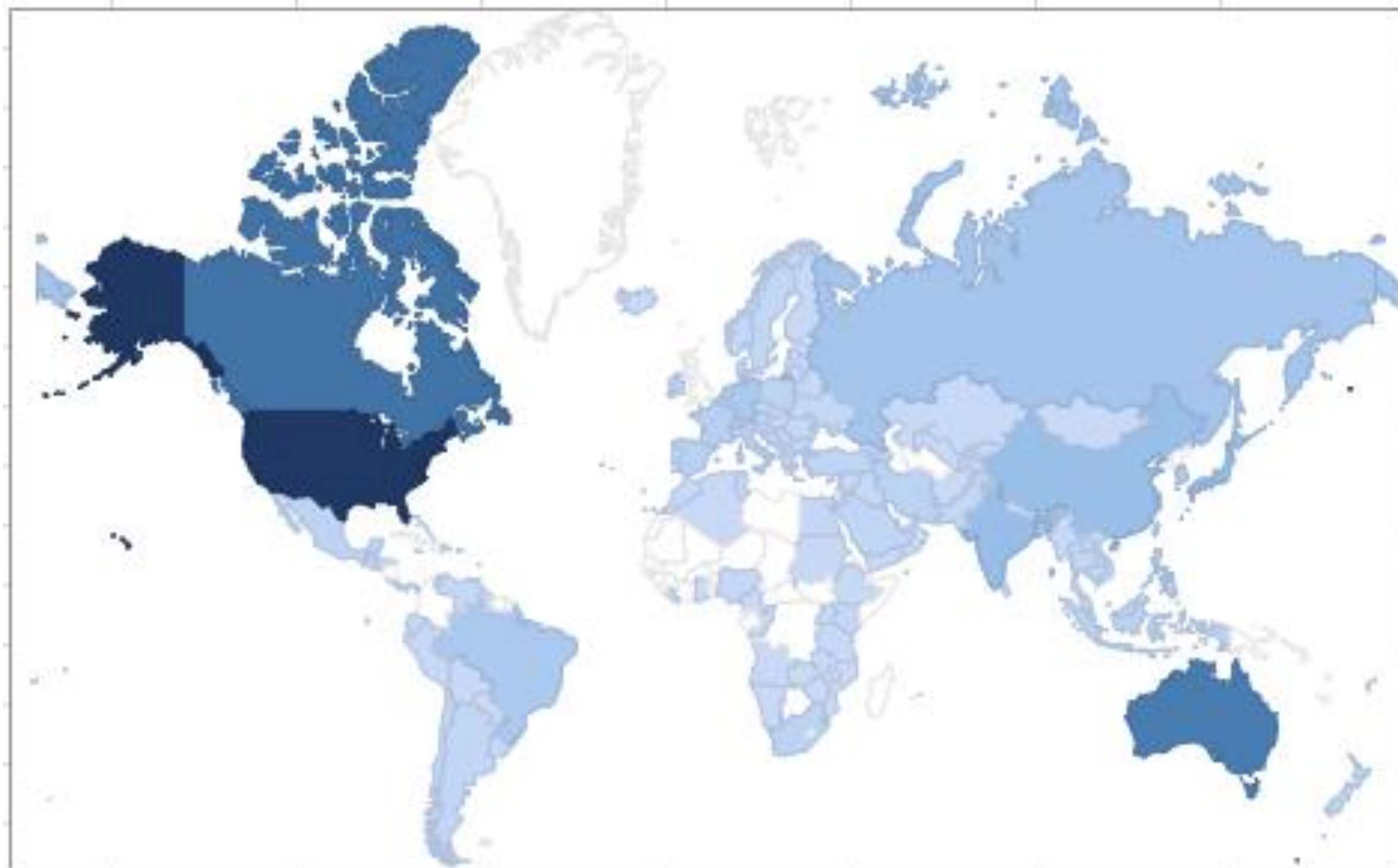
Healthy People 2020 lists 2 objectives relating directly to our goals in “Health Communication and Health Information Technology”:

1. HC/HIT-8: Increase the proportion of quality, health-related websites.
2. HC/HIT-13: Increase social marketing in health promotion and disease prevention.

Our academic website to the right, **Digital Literacy Partnership at Miami University**, promotes the contributions of literacy, health, and technology on learning (Ubbes, 2014).

We have begun to establish a **Social Marketing Plan** for the DLP by:

- 1) Inviting other public health programs to become partners in digital literacy and health literacy outreach to children, youth, and adults. Your organization’s website will be linked as our partner with the capacity to track Google Analytic data by frequencies and user characteristics.

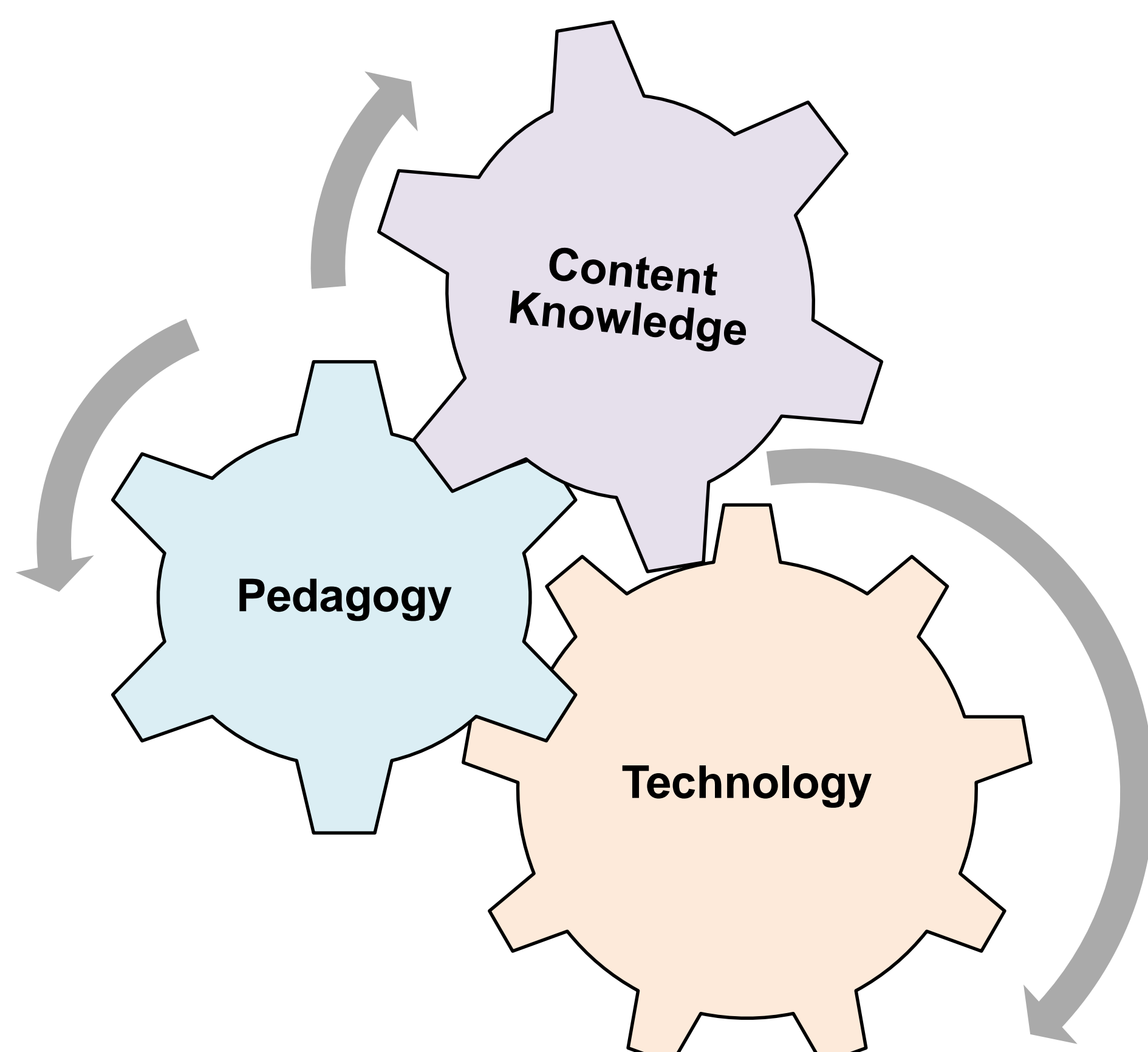


Current DLP Data: By the Numbers

•Between February 2014 and September 2017, our data show that the DLP has had more than 40,000 users and a total of 160,000 pageviews from 154 countries (figure above).

•The top 7 countries with the greatest access hits are United States, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, India, Japan, and China.

- 2) Another part of our Social Marketing Plan is to teach future public health education professionals the value of the TPACK model for digital literacy when they craft materials (shown below) and to assist with social media campaigns (see column to the bottom right).



FACT 2: Electronic Texts for Health Literacy© are a new genre of literature for people with low and emergent literacy.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Digital Literacy Partnership at Miami University. It features a header with the title and a tagline: "... promotes the contributions of literacy, health, and technology on learning." Below the header, there is a main section titled "Literacy is the number one predictor of our quality of life and health status." This section lists three interdisciplinary databases: Children's Picture Book Database at Miami University, Health Literacy Database at Miami University, and Health Advocacy Database at Miami University. Each database has a brief description and a list of target audiences. At the bottom, there is contact information for Valerie A. Ubbes, PhD, MCHES, Project Director, and a note about the partnership with the University Libraries Center for Digital Scholarship.

The **Digital Literacy Partnership** is a website compiled of 3 health-related databases, including children’s picture books, public service announcements, and health literacy materials @ <https://dlp.lib.miamioh.edu/>

In the Health Literacy Database at Miami University (2nd database above), a new genre of literature is available for people with low and emergent literacy. An example of a page in an **eBook for Oral Health Literacy©** is shown here:



An **Electronic Text for Health Literacy©** promotes functional health literacy which is one’s ability to read, write, and speak about health (Ubbes, 2014).

Health Literacy Dissemination through Social Media

- We are seeking alternative ways to promote our digital health literacy materials by using social media channels like Twitter (@DLPMiamiOH).
- We believe Pinterest will be a powerful way to disseminate eye-catching, infographics to teachers and parents, including some health organizations.



FACT 3: Health Literacy is a key determinant of health and the number one predictor of health status.

Health Literacy

•Health literacy is the number one predictor of health status (WHO Europe, 2013) and a social determinant of health (U.S.CDC, 2017).

•People with limited health literacy are at risk of having less health knowledge, lower health status, higher use of health services, and higher health care costs.

•Similar to our own project, the U.S. *Healthy People 2020* document is focused on reading skills:

AH-5.3.1 Increase the proportion of 4th grade students whose reading skills are at or above the proficient achievement level for their grade.

A similar objective is stated for grade 8 and grade 12.

Assessment of Health Literacy

The U.S. began assessing health literacy in 2013 with a revised National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL). NAAL is a nationally representative assessment of English literacy among American adults age 16 and older. Sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), NAAL is the nation’s most comprehensive measure of adult literacy since the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS).

Europe is more progressive in assessing health literacy skills within and across countries.



International Health Literacy

•The European Health Literacy Project (HLS-EU) conducted a survey of 9 EU member states to quantify, collect, compare, and evaluate data specific to health literacy – *across countries in Europe*.

•The International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) has established a Global Working Group (GWG) regarding health literacy in order to recognize the significance of health literacy on health promotion.

•The mission of the IUPHE GWG on health literacy is “to initiate and support action, policy, and research on health literacy acknowledging the contribution of health literacy to *reducing disparities* in the promotion of health and wellbeing ...”.

•The WHO Europe document called *The Solid Facts: Health Literacy* indicates that health literacy is highest among people who participate in physical exercise (see frequency table to the right below).

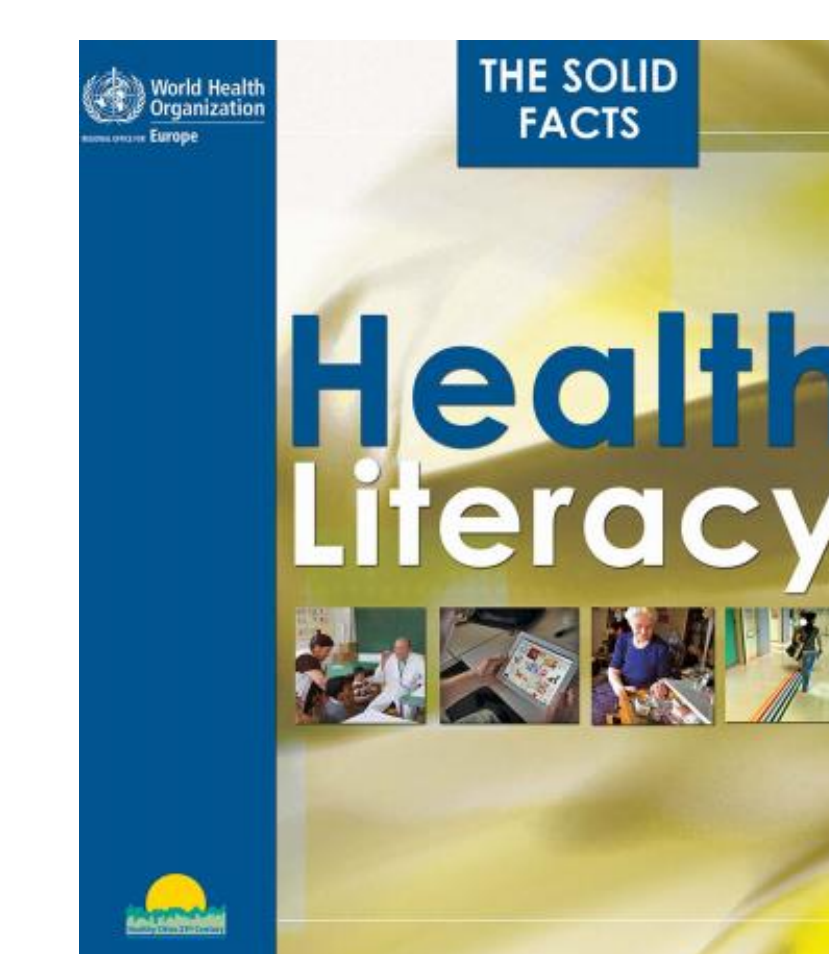
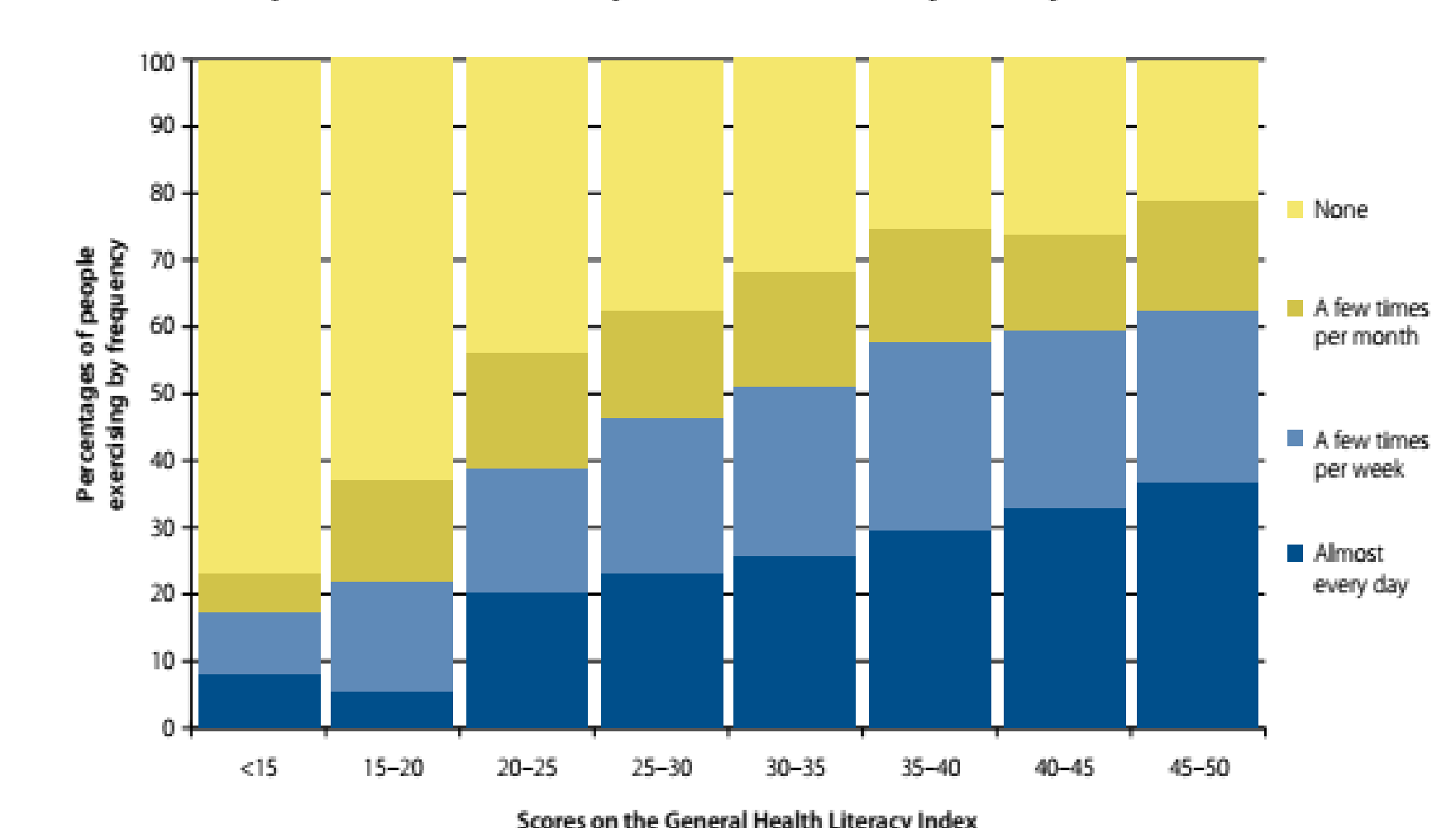


Fig. 7. Frequency of physical exercise according to scores on the General Health Literacy Index for the 7767 respondents in the European Health Literacy Survey



Source: adapted from: Comparative report on health literacy in eight EU member states. The European Health Literacy Project 2009–2012. Maastricht, HLS-EU Consortium, 2012 (<http://www.health-literacy.eu>, accessed 15 May 2013).