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Chemotherapy: What Does That Even Mean?

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to make a chemotherapy brochure accessible and understandable to UD Intensive English Program (IEP) students. From our results, there is evidence that taking the time to assess the readability of a health document can facilitate informed health decisions by individuals whose first language is not English.

Problem

- The original health document was from Cancer Treatment Centers of America and was an informational webpage about chemotherapy. It had a graduate reading level.
- The audience was IEP students with reading levels between grades 3-4.
- The problem was bringing this high reading level down to a level that is accessible to the IEP students.

Methods

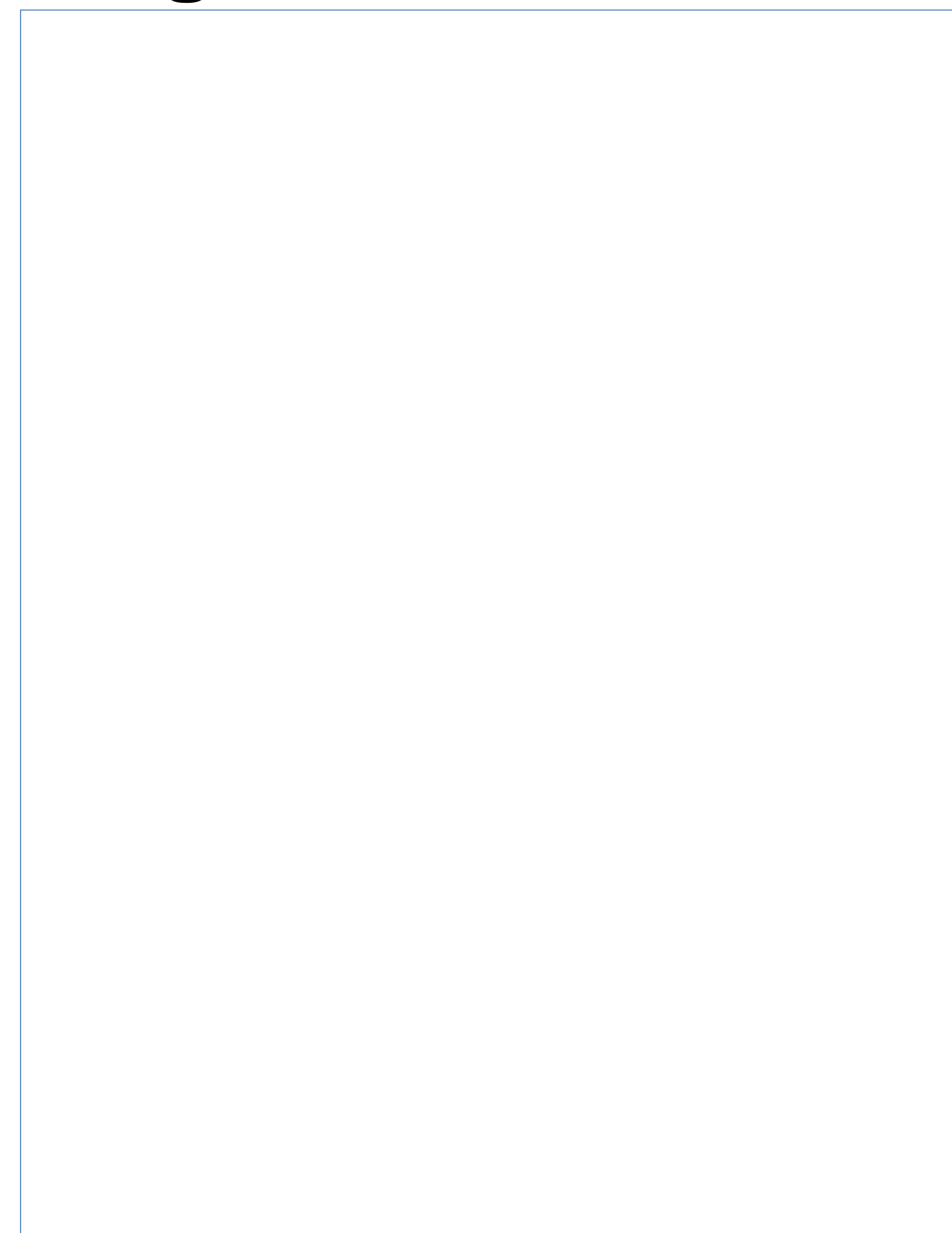
A SMOG test and a Health Literacy Load Analysis were conducted on the original document to evaluate its readability. A SMOG test involves calculations using the number of words with more than two syllables in the document along with the number of sentences. The Health Literacy Load Analysis involved analyzing the three domains of health literacy in the document: fundamental literacy, scientific literacy, cultural literacy, and civic literacy.

Method of Revision

The document was edited to facilitate a better flow of information. We limited the document to need-to-know information. Then we collaborated with the IEP students to understand what information was hard to understand and changed the content based on this feedback. Finally, we did a Health Literacy Load Analysis and a SMOG test to check the reading level of the revised document.

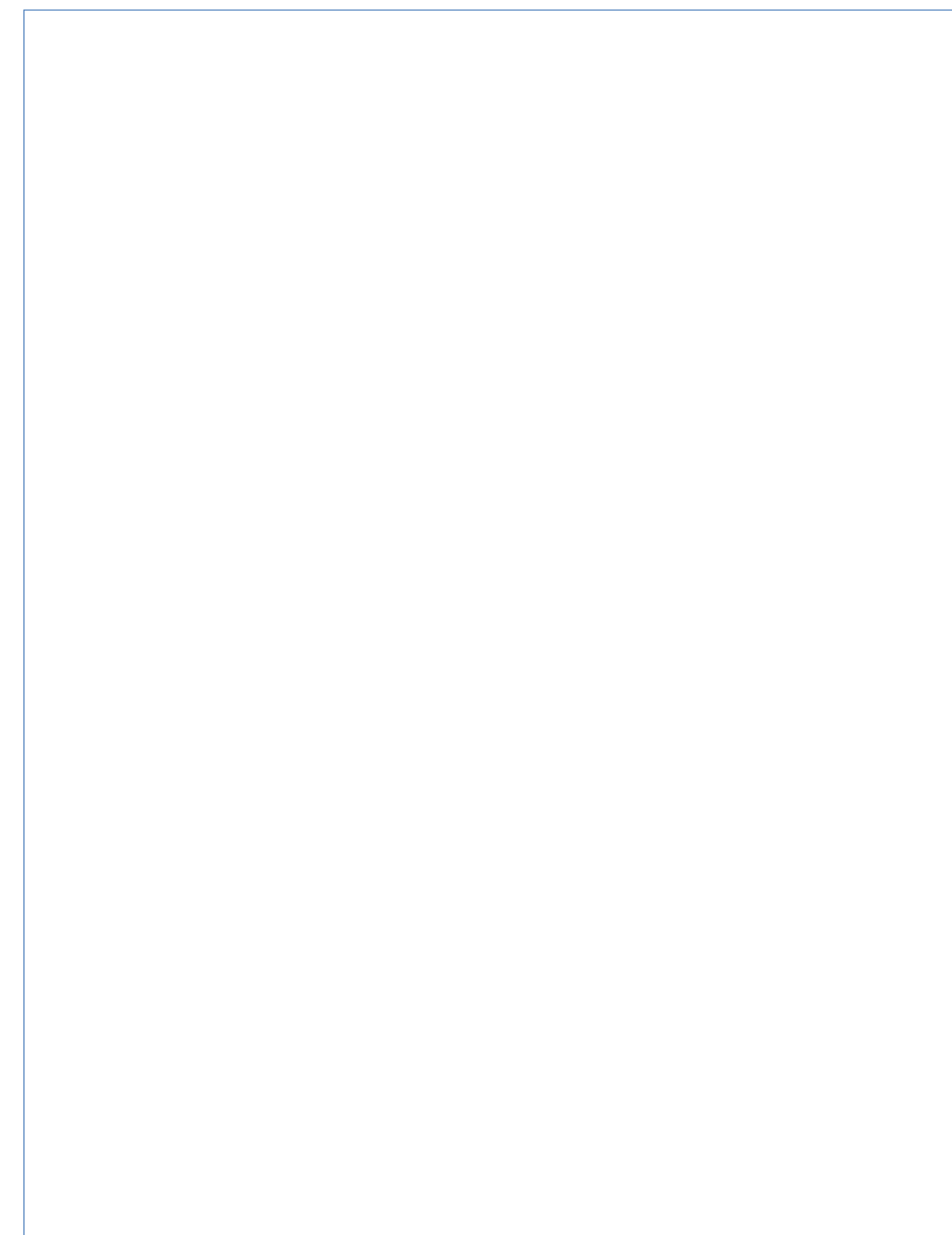


Original Document:



Results for Original Text:
 SMOG = grade 13 reading level
 Health Literacy Load Analysis = Fundamental – High, Scientific – High, Civic – Low

Revised Document:



Results for Revised Text:
 SMOG = grade 7 reading level
 Health Literacy Load Analysis = Fundamental – Low, Scientific – Low, Civic – Low

Discussion of Results

Based on the health literacy load analysis and SMOG tests, the original document is for a literacy level well above the majority of the population, but especially for the IEP students.

The revised better accommodates for IEP students and wider population, making this information more accessible.

Conclusion

The purpose of the original document is to explain the complex concept of chemotherapy so those who do not understand it can. Making simple changes can help people better individuals are unable to understand the information they need to be healthy and possibly save lives.