

Let's Be Clear

Making “AT Speak” Language Inclusive

Kim Singleton

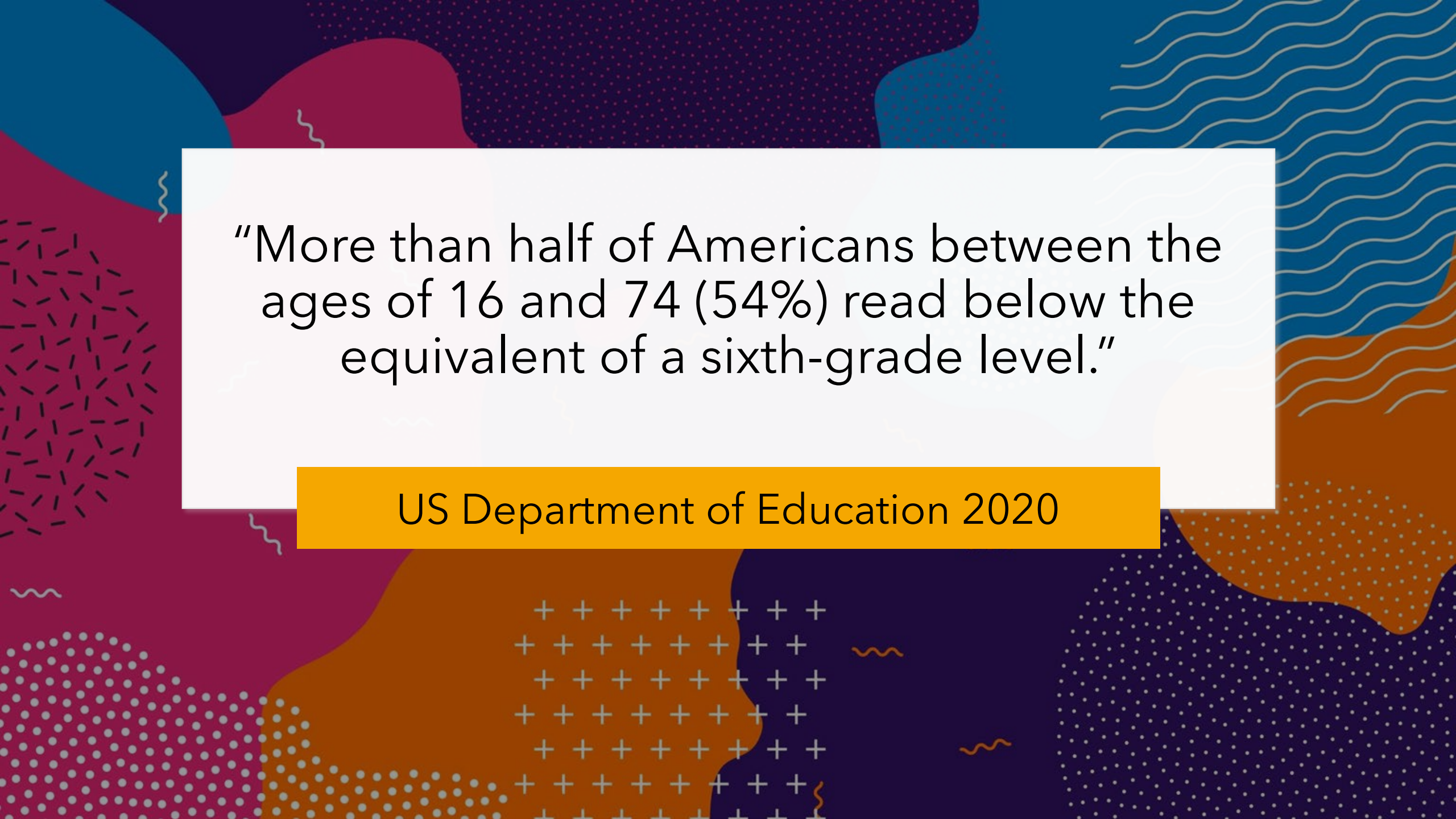
- Senior Director of Assistive Technology Programs
- TechOWL - **T**echnology for **O**ur **W**hole **L**ives
- Part of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University



Why should we care?

- We want to communicate to the widest possible audience.
- Accessible language is inclusive.
- Processing complex communication is tiring - for everyone.
- Digestible communication can connect people with different perspectives.



The background features a vibrant, abstract design with various colors and patterns. On the left, there are large, overlapping shapes in shades of blue, purple, and pink, some with dotted or dashed textures. On the right, there are wavy, horizontal lines in blue and orange. At the bottom, there are more colorful shapes, including a large orange one with a grid of small white plus signs and a dark blue one with a dotted pattern. The overall aesthetic is modern and artistic.

“More than half of Americans between the ages of 16 and 74 (54%) read below the equivalent of a sixth-grade level.”

US Department of Education 2020

Obtuse Title

***Consequences of Erudite Vernacular
Utilized Irrespective of Necessity***

Daniel Oppenheimer 2006

or

***Problems with Using
Long Words Needlessly***

Daniel Oppenheimer 2006

An abstract graphic on the left side of the page. It features several overlapping organic shapes in blue, orange, and purple. The blue shape has white wavy lines and a circular pattern of white dots. The orange shape has white wavy lines and a pattern of white dots. The purple shape has a pattern of white dots. There are also small orange wavy lines scattered throughout the purple background. A thin yellow horizontal line is positioned above the title.

Reasons for "AT Speak"

- Higher education promotes a complex, and thus admirable style.
- Sophisticated language signals that we are capable and intelligent.
- Communication is often meant for peers and designed to be exclusive.

Characteristics of "AT Speak"


- Audience
- Tone
- Vocabulary
- Jargon
- Sentence Structure
- Layout and Presentation
- Readability Score





Jargon Game

- IDD
- DEI
- AAC
- ABLE
- HCBS
- DSP
- NDEAM
- LEND
- AT
- BVR



“Any fool can make things bigger and more complex . It takes a touch of genius – and a lot of courage – to move in in the opposite direction”

- – [E. F. Schumacher](#)

Example of "AT Speak"

AT Demonstration Activities provide opportunities for people to become familiar with specific types of AT by comparing and contrasting the functions and features of devices through hands on exploration.

AT Device Loan Activities allow individuals to borrow AT for a limited time period to try out and determine if a device will meet their needs before a purchase is made.

AT Reutilization Activities support the reuse of assistive technology that is no longer needed or used by its original owner and is acquired by a new owner at substantial cost savings.

State Financing Activities support the purchase/acquisition of AT through financial loans or other initiatives that directly provide AT to consumers at no cost using dollars from non-AT Act sources or save consumers money when purchasing AT.



Analysis of Original Example

Readability Rating: E

Grade level: 18

Sentences of more than 30
syllables: 50%

Passive Voice Count: 3%

Reach: 21% of the general public

Characteristics of Accessible Language

- Audience
- Tone
- Vocabulary
- Jargon
- Sentence Structure
- Layout and Presentation
- Readability Level



Accessible Version

AT Demonstration Activities let people explore different types of AT. They can try out and compare various devices. They can see the similarities and differences between devices.

AT Device Loan Activities let people borrow AT for a limited time. By borrowing a device, people see if it is a good fit for them. Loans let people "try before they buy."

AT Reutilization Activities support new homes for used AT. When an original owner no longer needs AT, it can go to someone new. The new owner can get the AT for less money.

State Financing Activities help people get AT. Through non-AT Act programs, grants, or cash loans, people can get the AT they need. In some instances, people get AT for free. Sometimes, they save money when buying AT.



Analysis of Accessible Version

Readability Rating: A

Grade level: 6.4

Sentences of more than 30
syllables: 0%

Reach: 85% of the general public

Words of more than 12 letters: 2%

Tips



- Short, concise sentences.
- Avoid words with 5+ syllables
- The passive voice is not needed by anyone.
- Avoid adverbs.
- Use pronouns.
- Use headings, tables and lists.
- Omit unneeded words.
- If you use a complex word, explain it.
- Keep the subject and verb together.

Tools

- Microsoft Editor
- [Grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com)
- [Readable.com](https://readable.com)
- [Hemingwayapp.com](https://www.hemingwayapp.com)
- [Rewordify](https://www.rewordify.com)



Let's Be Clear - Activity

- Find some text (yours or mine)
- Make it more accessible.
- Share and discuss.
- [Wakelet](#)

Thank you.



- Kim Singleton, MS, CCC-SLP
- kim.singleton@temple.edu
- [TechOWL](#)
- [Wakelet](#)