



## Lexile Measures Help High School Differentiate Instruction, Prepare Students for Success in Life

**Today's high school teachers and administrators perform daring feats of balance that would inspire envy in circus performers.** They struggle daily to provide students with a solid education in standard content areas while preparing them for post-secondary life. At Broome High School in Spartanburg, S.C., this high-wire act is made easier by the school-wide adoption of The Lexile Framework® for Reading.

Recognized as the most widely adopted reading measure, Lexile® measures are used at the school level in various capacities in all 50 states. Each year, more than 28 million Lexile measures are reported from state and national assessments, classroom assessments and reading programs, representing about half of U.S. students.

The Lexile Framework is an educational tool that connects readers with reading materials using a common measure called a Lexile. What makes the Lexile Framework unique, and what has led to its widespread adoption, is that it measures both reading ability and text difficulty on the same developmental scale. When used together, Lexile reader measures and Lexile text measures allow educators, parents and students to find books and other materials that meet and challenge a reader's unique ability and interests. Currently, more than 115,000 books, 80 million articles and 60,000 Web sites have Lexile measures, and the number of resources with Lexile measures continues to grow.

The Broome High School slogan, "Conquer and Prevail," mirrors the determination to excel exhibited by Principal Vernon Prosser and his staff. The high school serves 930 students from seven local, historic communities.

"Education is no longer one-size-fits-all," said Prosser. "We have to use differentiated instruction to meet kids where they are and help them from that point."

Prosser became well-versed in the benefits of Lexile measures as principal of a middle school. When he transferred to Broome, he brought his enthusiasm for the reading measure with him. "Our high school students received Lexile measures through the MAP tests, but only the English department was using them," he said. "We pushed the measures out into other content areas, and the majority of our teachers use them now."

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—Dr. Vernon Prosser, Principal, Broome High School

MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) is a computer-based test from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) that adapts to a student's ability and is based on an equal-interval growth measure to accurately measure and report what the student knows and needs to learn.

With Prosser at the helm, teachers learned how to use existing Lexile measures and the Lexile Analyzer®, a free, online tool that allows users to analyze text and generate a Lexile measure, to reach all students at their individual levels.

### **Lexile Measures Inform Instruction**

"It's one thing to know everyone's Lexile measures, but another to then turn around

and plan instruction based on the various ranges in the class," said Prosser. "Another big challenge is not mistaking a Lexile measure for a grade-level equivalent. It's natural for a teacher to want to say a student is reading at such-and-such a grade level, but that's not accurate."

Erin Greenway, an English teacher who is now an assistant principal at Broome, said the English department was eager to integrate Lexile measures into its curriculum. "The teachers saw the students' Lexile measures on the [MAP] reports and wanted to know what they meant, and how they could use them to help kids improve, so they researched the measure on their own," she said. "We decided as a school to share this information and use Lexile measures in all content areas, as a team. It went from teachers learning about Lexile measures to teaching students and parents about them."

With a firm commitment to using Lexile measures to enhance instruction, Prosser has encouraged teachers to use them as a tool in their daily lesson planning. They check Lexile measures for books, and use the Lexile Analyzer to get measures for tests, handouts and other materials used in the classroom. In addition to checking the library catalog to make sure there is a wide range of materials to reach every Lexile level, the English department is reviewing the reading lists suggested by the school district.

"We're making sure we're using texts that are appropriate for the students' Lexile levels," said Greenway. "We haven't had to adjust that much because most were appropriate, but some were surprising. 'The Good Earth,' for example, was exceptionally high."

### Testing Accessible to All

Using testing materials that all students can comprehend is important to all faculty members at Broome High School. In the science department, teachers used Lexile measures to make the tests accessible to students at all levels. Matt Davis, a former science teacher, said, “In a physical science class, a high school student needs to be in the 1000L–1200L [Lexile] range to understand the materials and the test. Students at a 700L or 800L range will have problems, so you have to approach them a little differently. You may need to have material outside the textbook to get them there.”

Davis helped his students at lower Lexile levels identify keywords in passages, especially for state assessments, so the students can match the keywords from the text in the test.

Principal Prosser agrees that test materials can be an issue. “Even our computer assessments—and we use several—can pose problems,” he noted. “If the Lexile level of a child is lower than the level at which the problem is written, we don’t have a match there, so we have a problem. Students may know how to do the math, but if they can’t read the word problem, they can’t do the work.”

To help overcome this challenge, a math teacher used the Lexile Analyzer to get Lexile measures for the word problems in the school’s computer assessments so she could match students to problems with the appropriate Lexile levels.

Greenway said, “Our state end-of-course tests are about meeting kids where they are now and getting them to where they need to be. Since our teachers are held accountable based on their assessments, they find that it’s in their best interest to use Lexile measures so their kids are successful.”

### School-wide Effort, School-wide Success

Although block scheduling and varying class choices among students make it difficult to track improvements by Lexile measures, administrators are confident that the focus on appropriate-level instruction is making a difference. “The hardest thing to make happen at a high school is differentiated instruction,” said Prosser. “Using Lexile measures really helps our teachers to differentiate.”

Ultimately, the success of the high school’s literacy initiatives will be demonstrated in how its students succeed beyond high school. Broome’s graduation rate ranks 20<sup>th</sup> in the state; 73 percent of its graduates go on to further education.

“Our job is to educate young people so they can go on and do what they want to do,” said Greenway. “Using Lexile measures is one of the ways you can meet kids where they are and help them move up, help them to grow and be productive citizens.”

“It’s important for us to meet students at their instructional level, so they will succeed,” said Prosser. “Lexile measures help us to do that.”

**Broome High School** (Spartanburg School District 3) serves a student population of 930 in eastern South Carolina. Students come from seven historic communities to attend the high school.

#### Benefits of Using Lexile Measures

- Creates opportunities for differentiated instruction
- Enables teachers to adjust test materials to appropriate levels
- Helps keep students on path to success
- Provides tracking and assessment feedback for administrators

For more information on how The Lexile Framework for Reading can help to link assessment with instruction and improve the reading abilities of all students, call **1-888-LEXILES** or visit **www.Lexile.com**.



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