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Meet Michelle Eral, MS, CCC-SLP, Creator of *TheraSimplicity*-Part II
By Erica Anderson

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In the first part of this interview, you met Michelle Eral, MS-CCC/SLP, creator of TheraSimplicity. In part two, you will learn the story of TheraSimplicity from the beginning, to the present day and beyond.

From the Beginning...

As you read in the first part of this interview, Michelle Eral came up with the initial concept for *TheraSimplicity* based on her own intervention needs in 1997. In its infancy, *TheraSimplicity* was beta tested in CD format in three prominent clinical settings: Gillette Children's Hospital, The Mayo Clinic, and Courage Center. A pretty big step for a little idea, to be sure. Michelle's intention from the onset was that *TheraSimplicity* would be Internet-based for the most convenient delivery. In 2000, this goal was accomplished, and *TheraSimplicity* was released as an online product.



TheraSimplicity

TheraSimplicity was created by an SLP for SLPs, and Michelle is quick to reinforce the importance of professional collaboration to the success of the resource. "*TheraSimplicity* recognizes what a deep talent pool we have in the SLP community." An important part of this, as Michelle points out, is that from the beginning, they never intended to "tell people how to treat their clients." Instead, the creators "simply wanted to put as many resources out there as speech-language pathologists would need to help them apply their expertise in the most effective way possible."

TheraSimplicity is designed for use in all settings in which SLPs work. It is very visual, intuitive, and easy to use. This means making sure everyone has the chance to contribute to the tool that they are using every day. "We can most effectively serve our customers by finding out what people do best and cultivating that knowledge to make the *TheraSimplicity* environment better."

To the Present Day...

TheraSimplicity was created to be a living product. This means that it is continuously updated, so the most current information and resources are always available to users. When it became an online tool, it also became a convenient subscription-based service. Members renew yearly for access to its wealth of resources. Online delivery also means that users never need to worry about software upgrades or patches. One of the key components built into the resource is relevance—users know their peers in the speech and

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language community are behind all the content on the site. In addition, users can create and customize intervention materials. *TheraSimplicity* also lets users save their work, so it's always there when needed.

TheraSimplicity is packed with materials that users can customize, like worksheets, activities, flashcards, slideshows, and games. Users can also utilize precreated resources "as-is" for their specific treatment needs. It's up to the individual user.

TheraSimplicity makes serving and supporting customers a top priority. For example, password support is available 24/7. Sometimes users just need a better idea of how *TheraSimplicity* works, which the team accommodates with a phone call or consultant visit—whatever is needed. This commitment to the user is one reason Michelle believes *TheraSimplicity* is a phenomenal resource.

This invaluable resource has been enthusiastically greeted within the SLP community since it first became available in the late 1990s. The world outside the SLP community has also taken notice. *TheraSimplicity* was nominated for Microsoft's Small Business Solution of the Year two years ago. Quite a dramatic entry into a simple product idea's adolescence!

...and Beyond

Two exciting new components are coming soon to the *TheraSimplicity* environment. First, an AAC section will allow users to create communication boards, story boards and sequencing boards. They can either import images, or use any of the images on the *TheraSimplicity* site. Michelle is excited about this addition, and is quick to point out that the "images in this area are tremendous and unique in the speech and language community." Second, a new autism section will meet a growing need in the field and many requests from professionals. Users will be able to create "About Me" books, which work to educate others, transition clients, and promote clients' self-advocacy efforts.

Feedback from professionals helps *TheraSimplicity* grow and improve, and frequently results in improvements to the *TheraSimplicity* environment. This is part of the "you ask for it, you get it" approach that keeps *TheraSimplicity* relevant. For example, if an SLP has a different treatment approach than one offered on the *TheraSimplicity* site, that person is encouraged to create a new *TheraSimplicity* page and publish what they think and why. In its next stages of life, *TheraSimplicity* wants to continue to remain as flexible and current as possible. By all accounts, *TheraSimplicity* seems to be on the right path!

Click here to visit the [TheraSimplicity](#) product page.

Meet *TheraSimplicity* (and Michelle!) at the ASHA Schools conference, July 8-10, booth #63.

Michelle is looking forward to attending the ASHA Schools conference, where *TheraSimplicity* will partner with AGS Publishing. When asked what she likes about conferences like this, she said, "they are so reaffirming to me, especially on the development side. After attending a conference like ASHA Schools, I really feel like I'm doing something right." In addition, she always enjoys hearing stories about how *TheraSimplicity* has helped SLPs be more effective. As Michelle states with conviction, "I truly believe in *TheraSimplicity* and its ability to make the lives of speech-language professionals easier."

All in all, that's quite a story.

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