

**Write for the Reader**

Making Research

Accessible

# Workshop Objectives

- clear writing & design
- research translation
- research summaries & posters

# Accessible Research

- engages new audiences
- mobilizes knowledge
- builds capacity

# What is Clear Language

Clear language is an approach to communication that puts the **reader first** and focuses on **action**.

# What is Clear Language

- writing your reader knows
- information your audience needs
- design that helps understanding

# Need for Clear Language

- literacy skills
- experience with English
- information overload
- readers are changing

# Benefits of Clear Language

- reach larger audience
- engage people
- save time and money
- improve outcomes

# Common Objections

- takes too long
- offends readers
- sophistication and precision



# 6-Step Process

Think



Plan



Write



Design



Test



Revise

# Step 1: Thinking

- know your reader
- know your purpose
- know your impact

# Step 2: Planning

- essential information
- order
- tone
- style
- format
- design

# Step 3: Writing

- organization
- words
- sentences
- tone
- paragraphs
- aspects of grammar

# Step 3: Writing

- put most important ideas near the beginning
- use logical order based on reader's needs
- make the order of the material obvious

# Step 3: Writing

avoid acronyms and abbreviations

- i.e. vs. e.g.

be careful with nouns made from verbs:

- decision, determination, examination

# Step 3: Writing

vary the sentence length

use simple, complete sentences:

- Matthew presents this workshop  
(Subject) (Verb) (Object)

reduce noun stacks

- “micro bacteria population diversity has increased in the last three years”

# Step 3: Writing

## Paragraphs

- 3 – 5 sentences
- topic sentence
- introductory words, phrases, transitions, definitions, examples, commentary

## Chunks

- information blocks
- one kind of meaning
- leave out what's not relevant to this chunk



# Research Summaries

- engagement
- accessibility
- capacity building

# Audience / End User

- who is the audience?
- what is the purpose?
- what is the intended impact?
- so what? / what's in it for me?

# Purpose / Impact

- design, deliver programs / services
- build knowledge / expertise
- train staff
- market programs
- seek partnerships

# Research Summary Template

- publisher (organization)
- researcher / author
- publication date (of summary)
- key references, citations
- Key subject words

# Research Summary Template

- 500 - 1000 words maximum
- short title
- summary of summary
- where to learn more
- visual (image, chart, graphic)

# Sections

- What is this research about?
- What did the researchers do?
- What did the researchers find?
- What you need to know
- How can you use this research?
- About the researchers

# Research Summaries with the 6 Steps

- Think: who do we want to read these?
- Plan: what content is essential?
- Write: what might be potential jargon?
- Design: what visuals can be included?
- Test: does it meet the guidelines?
- Revise: adapt using clear writing principles

# Step 4: Designing

- questions and answers
- check lists
- point form
- tables



# Step 4: Designing

text type – 12 pt.

headline type – 18 pt.

slide type – 44 pt.

# Step 4: Designing

Lower case letters are easier to read than capital letters. They give the reader more visual information about the characteristics of each letter.

WORDS MADE UP OF CAPITAL LETTERS ARE SEEN AS BLOCKS AND ARE HARD TO READ, ESPECIALLY IN A PASSAGE OF TEXT.

# Step 4: Designing

Text that has a ragged or uneven right margin is easier to read than text that has a justified or full margin. This paragraph was typed with an uneven right margin and no hyphenation.

Text that is centred or ragged on both sides doesn't show the reader where sentences begin and end. It looks like each line is a sentence in itself.

A justified right margin creates unequal spaces between words and hyphenates many words at the end of lines. Hyphenated words are hard to read, so turn off "hy-phenation" when you use a word processor. This paragraph was typed with a full margin and hy-phenation.

# Step 4: Designing

- contrast
- ratio of images to words

# Research Posters

- visual summary
- concise text and graphics
- illustrated abstract vs.  
infographic

# Research Posters

## Tips

- text from research summaries
- design in the printing size
- complementary colours
- columns

# Research Posters

## Tips

- visible from a distance
- reduce word count
- high quality photos
- graphics and charts

# Research Posters

- Word, PowerPoint, Publisher
- Adobe InDesign
- Infogr.am
- Piktochart



# Step 5 & 6: Testing and Revising

- Flesch-Kincaid
- Fog Index
- Fry Readability

## **Step 5 & 6: Testing and Revising**

- read document aloud
- ask colleague to read your draft
- conduct a focus group

# Applications for Clear Language

- blogs
- videos / podcasts
- presentations
- news releases

# More Information

- Clear Writing and Literacy, 2nd Edition  
[en.copian.ca/library/research/olc/clear/cover.htm](http://en.copian.ca/library/research/olc/clear/cover.htm)
- On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction  
[William Zinsser](#)
- Matthew Shulman  
[mcsulman@phdaln.on.ca](mailto:mcsulman@phdaln.on.ca)