A. Guide for trainers - Educational Resource created by Adriana Iacob

Context

City/Country: Applicable nationwide, but can be customized for different regions of Romania. The main location for implementation can be Cluj-Napoca, where CCD Cluj plays an active role in teachers training.

Structure: This guide is created for the teacher trainers and its aim is to provide a clear methodological framework to guide the drafting and communication process in an educational context.

Field of activity: Teachers training in pre-university education, with a focus on the use of clear and easy-to-understand language in all written materials and presentations delivered during the training courses.

Identified needs

1. Complexity of current materials used in training:
Many trainers use course materials or presentations that contain technical language, specific terms, or long, complicated phrases. This can generate difficulties in understanding, especially for participants with less experience or who are not familiar with the concepts presented.

2. Lack of a standardized methodology for clear language:
Currently, there is no guide or dedicated resources to support trainers in writing easy-to-understand materials for teachers.

3. Accessibility and inclusion:
Complicated language can exclude certain groups of learners, especially those who have difficulties in understanding extended texts or who do not have advanced training in the field.

4. The need for efficiency in the teaching process:
Clear messages reduce the time required for clarifications and questions, which leads to a more efficient learning process and increased the paticipants' involvement.

5. Adoption of modern and effective communication:
In a dynamic educational environment, it is essential for trainers to be able to quickly adapt materials for diverse audiences and integrate clear language into their resources.

Objectives

1. Creating accessible teaching materials:
Supporting trainers in writing course materials (presentations, guides, worksheets) using clear,

structured and easy-to-understand language for all teachers, regardless of their level of experience.

2. Promoting inclusion:
Encouraging the use of accessible language that facilitates the understanding and active participation of all learners, including those with learning difficulties or language barriers.

3. Standardization of clear language:
Provide a set of rules and best practices to be integrated into all stages of the teaching process and in continuing education materials.

4. Streamlining the learning process:
Reduce the time allocated to clarifications and increase the time for practical application and relevant discussions, through the use of concise and direct messages.

5. Raising awareness among trainers:
Raising awareness of the importance of clear messaging in education, so that trainers become promoters of this approach in their professional communities.

6. Integration of modern tools:
Encouraging the use of digital technologies and tools that can support trainers in writing and assessing the clarity of their materials.

Target groups
1. Teacher trainers:
- Persons who offer continuous training and professional development courses for teachers in pre-university education.
- Trainers from various educational fields who need resources and guides to adapt their teaching style and materials to clear language.

2. Teachers:
- Teaching staff in pre-university education who participate in continuing professional training courses.
- Entry-level teaching staff at the beginning of their careers, who can benefit from simplified teaching materials to better understand the content and apply it effectively.

3. Training institutions:
- Teachers' houses, training centers and other institutions that organize professional development programs for teachers.
- Teacher training departments that want to implement uniform standards for clear language in their materials.

4. Other actors in education:

- Educational managers and school inspectors who could use this guide to ensure consistency and accessibility in all official documents and communication materials.
- Organisers of online courses and e-learning platforms who want to improve the accessibility and clarity of their content.

The existing proposal

1. Introduction of clear language in continuing education:

Currently, some organizations and training institutions try to simplify the messages, but this practice is not standardized or widely adopted. Plain language is not only a method of writing, but also a strategic tool that improves communication and inclusion. In education, the application of this method is limited due to the lack of a coherent methodological framework.

2. Limitations of current materials:
- Most course materials and presentations are designed for a general audience, without taking into account the diversity of teachers' training levels.
- The technical language and complex structures of the documents make it difficult to understand and apply the content in practice.
- The resources available are rarely adapted for beginners or for learners less familiar with certain terminologies.

3. Successful practices:
- Some organizations have implemented clear drafting methods, such as:
- Use of short sentences and plain language in administrative documents and educational guides.
- Creating glossaries for technical terms and using visual examples in course materials.
- Testing the training materials on pilot groups before large-scale implementation.
- However, these practices are not scalable and are not integrated into a widely accepted methodology.

4. The need for a common methodology:
- At national level, there is a vacuum in terms of training trainers for the use of clear language. There are no standardized guides available that provide specific techniques for simplifying messages in courses dedicated to teachers.
- A clear toolbox is needed, including:
    - o Writing rules for accessible language.
    - o Practical exercises to improve the communication skills of the trainers.
    - o Adaptable digital and print resources for different educational contexts.

5. Integration of modern technologies:
- AI-based tools can assess the clarity of texts by analysing sentence structure, word length and readability.
- E-learning platforms can integrate modules dedicated to plain language, providing interactive examples for learners.

6. Dissemination potential and impact:
- The methodology can be replicated in other educational areas, such as the development of school curricula, the drafting of administrative documentation or the development of good practice guides.
- The resources created will be able to be used not only by trainers, but also by teachers, school managers and other education professionals.

The adaptation process
1. Analysis of the audience and its needs:
To design effective materials, trainers must understand the characteristics and needs of their audience:

i) Participant profiles:
• Beginners need detailed explanations, simple examples, and step-by-step guidance.
• Experienced participants prefer concise summaries and access to additional resources.
Example: In a session on interactive methods, beginners should be given a specific example ("How to organize a brainstorming activity"), while advanced participants can use a comparative table of methods with their advantages and disadvantages.

ii) Linguistic and educational diversity:
• Participants from rural areas may have less exposure to modern terminology.
• Some may struggle with technical or academic terms.
Example: Instead of a "constructivist approach," explain, "Students learn better when they build their own knowledge through practice."

2. Rules for writing clear messages:
i) Short and clear sentences:
Rule: Each sentence should convey a single idea.
Example: Instead of "The course proposes an innovative methodology based on active learning for the development of teaching skills", write "This course teaches a practical method to become a more effective teacher."

ii) Avoid jargon:
Rule: Avoid using specific terms without explanation.
Example: Instead of "soft skills", say "skills that can be used in any situation".

iii) Concise but complete:
Rule: Explain only what is necessary for understanding.
Example: Focus on practical applications such as "Debates help students develop critical thinking skills" rather than describing the history of each teaching method.

3. Use of visual resources:
i) Illustrative images:
• In a guide to classroom management, include a chart with the optimal seating arrangement for group activities.

ii) Simple diagrams:
• To explain formative vs. summative assessment, use a table:

Formative assessment Summative assessment
Provide quick feedback Evaluate the final results
Continues occasionally

iii) Infographics:
Example: An infographic about the steps of an interactive lesson: "1. Opening question, 2. Practice activity, 3. Feedback."

4. Material testing before use:

i) Pilot testing:
• Share materials with colleagues or a small group of participants for feedback.
Example: Before a course on modern teaching methods, ask a pilot group to plan a lesson using the prepared materials and gather feedback on clarity.

ii) Continuous review:
• After each session, collect direct feedback: "Which part was hard to understand?"

5. Adapting materials for various formats:

i) PowerPoint presentations:
Rules:
  − Each slide must answer a single question or assignment.
  − Use visuals to clarify text, not decorate it.
Example: For a lesson about active learning, create a slide titled "What is active learning?" with only two or three key benefits and a representative image.

ii) Printed materials:
-       Add white space between paragraphs for readability.
Example: In a guide to constructive feedback, include a clearly formatted section:
"Correct: You have worked well on the introduction, but try to explain the conclusions more clearly.
Incorrect: Your conclusion is not well written."

iii) Digital resources:
-       Integrate hyperlinks to additional explanations or videos.
Example: A PDF about digital teaching tools can include links to YouTube tutorials on Google Classroom.

6. Use of collaborative technologies:

i) Applications for checking clarity:
Example: Use *Grammarly*[1] to analyze the grammar and style of the text, or *Hemingway Editor*[2] to assess readability.

ii) Creation of interactive modules:
Use interactive platforms such as *H5P*[3] to create interactive quizzes in presentations or guides.
Example: In a guide on "How to Give Feedback," it includes an interactive exercise where users identify right and wrong comments.

7. How to create easy-to-read reading materials:
        i). Clear and concise structure

Clear headings and subheadings: They guide the reader and give them an overview of the content.

Short paragraphs: The main ideas should be presented in concise, easy-to-follow paragraphs.

Lists and points: Use lists and dots to highlight important information and make it easier to remember.

ii). Simple and direct language

Avoid jargon: Use simple and straightforward language that is accessible to everyone.

Define technical terms: If necessary, explain the domain-specific terms.

Use concrete examples: Examples make information easier to understand and remember.

iii). Eye-catching visual format

Easy-to-read font: Choose a font that is clear and appropriately sized.

Proper spacing: Leave enough space between lines and paragraphs to make it easier to read.

Images and graphics: Use images and graphics to illustrate concepts and make the material more interesting.

Colors: Use colors to highlight important information, but avoid an overly varied palette that could be distracting.

iv). Logical organization

Introduction, development, conclusion: Structure the material in a logical manner, with an introduction that introduces the topic, a development that explains the concepts, and a conclusion that summarizes the main ideas.

Clear connections: Make sure that the ideas are presented in a logical order and that there are clear connections between them.

v). Adaptation to the reader's needs

Level of knowledge: Adapt the level of detail according to the readers' prior knowledge.

Interests: Identify readers' interests and tailor content accordingly.

Time available: Take into account the time readers can devote to studying the material.

Examples of easy-to-read materials

- *Handouts with blank spaces for notes:* Allow readers to fill in missing information and personalize their learning experience.
- *Infographics:* Visual representations of complex information that are easy to understand and remember.
- *Short and concise videos:* Clear and concise explanations of the concepts, accompanied by practical examples.
- *Interactive presentations*: Presentations that allow readers to explore content at their own pace.

Additional tips

- *Test the materials:* Before sharing the materials, ask colleagues or

friends to read them and provide feedback.

- *Use active language:* Instead of saying "It's important to...", say "In order to..." or "To get the best results...".
- *Provide practical examples:* Link theoretical information to real classroom situations.
- *Encourage questions:* Create an environment where readers feel encouraged to ask questions.

8. Strategies to make presentations more interactive:
- An interactive presentation not only conveys information, but also actively engages the audience, making the session more dynamic and memorable. Here are some effective strategies to achieve this:

i) Before the presentation:
- *Know your audience:* Adapt your content and presentation style to the interests and knowledge level of the participants.
- *Set clear goals:* What do you want to achieve at the end of the presentation? What actions would you like to inspire in the audience?
- *Choose the right format:* Decide whether you will use a classic presentation, a webinar, an interactive workshop or a combination of these.

ii) During the presentation:
- *Interactive Questions:*
  - Ask open-ended questions at the beginning of each section to capture attention.
  - Use quick polls to check audience understanding.
  - Organize brainstorming sessions in small groups.
- *Practical activities:*
  - Propose short exercises, such as solving problems or creating diagrams.
  - Use case studies to stimulate critical thinking.
  - Hold debates on controversial topics.
- *Interactive technologies*:
  - Use tools like Mentimeter, Kahoot!, Google Forms to create polls, quizzes, and interactive activities.
  - Integrate videos, animations, and interactive presentations.
- *Inclusive language:*
  - Use simple and direct language, avoiding jargon.
  - Address attendees directly, using the pronouns "we" and "you."
- *Non-verbal communication:*
  - Maintain eye contact with your audience.
  - Use gestures and facial expressions to emphasize ideas.
  - Move in space to create dynamism.

iii) After presentation:
- *Provide additional resources*: Provide participants with reference materials, links to online resources, or bibliography.
- *Encourage feedback:* Ask attendees to provide feedback on the presentation so you can improve future presentations.

- *Track the results:* Assess whether the objectives of the presentation have been achieved and whether the participants have acquired the desired knowledge and skills.

Examples of interactive tools:
- *Mentimeter*[4]: For real-time polls and words in the cloud.
- *Kahoot!*[5]: For interactive quizzes and games.
- *Google Forms*[6]: To create quizzes and surveys.
- *Padlet*[7]: To create collaborative idea boards.
- *Prezi*[8]: For non-linear and interactive presentations.

Additional tips:
Repeat the presentation: Simulate the presentation to identify weaknesses and make sure everything is working properly.
Be prepared for questions: Anticipate the questions that participants might ask you and prepare clear answers.
Be flexible: Adapt to the pace and interests of your audience.
Have fun! An interactive presentation should be an enjoyable experience for both the trainer and the participants.

9. How to use technology to enhance the learning experience:
Technology has revolutionized the way we learn, providing a wide range of tools and platforms that can make the learning process more interactive, personalized, and effective. Here are some ways you can use technology to improve your learning experience:

For teachers:
- *Interactive presentations:* Using tools like *PowerPoint*, *Prezi*, or *Google Slides*, you can create dynamic and interactive presentations that include videos, animations, and polls.
- *Virtual learning platforms:* They allow for the creation of online courses, the management of student activities, and the facilitation of communication.
- *Collaboration tools:* Facilitate teamwork, both in the classroom and remotely.
- *Apps for content creation:* They allow the creation of infographics, explainer videos, and other visual materials that support learning.

For students:
- *Online learning platforms:* Provides access to courses, tutorials, and interactive exercises on a variety of topics.
- *Mobile applications:* They allow learning anytime and anywhere, through educational games, dictionaries, translation tools, etc.
- *Educational social networks:* Facilitates collaboration and exchange of information with other students and teachers.
- *Productivity Tools:* Helps with time organization, task management, and note-taking.

Benefits of using technology in learning:
- *Personalization of learning:* Each student can learn at their own pace and focus on the topics

that interest them most.
- *Improved motivation:* Games, competitions, and instant feedback can make learning more fun and motivating.
- *Developing digital skills:* The use of technology in the learning process prepares students for an increasingly digitized world.
- *Facilitating collaboration:* Online collaboration tools allow students to work together, even remotely.

Examples of technological tools useful in learning:
- *Online learning platforms:* Moodle, Google Classroom, Khan Academy.
- *Content creation tools:* Canva, Adobe Spark, Powtoon.
- *Apps for collaboration:* Google Docs, Microsoft Teams, Padlet.
- *Tools for creating quizzes:* Kahoot!, Quizizz.
- *Videoconferencing platforms:* Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet.

Tips for effective use of technology in learning:
- *Set clear goals:* Before using a specific technology, think about what you want to achieve.
- *Choose the right tools:* Don't overload students with too many tools. Choose the ones that best suit your needs and goals.
- *Provide technical support*: Ensure that students have access to technical support in case they encounter difficulties.
- *Integrate technology into learning activities:* Don't use technology just for the sake of using it. Integrate it in a meaningful way into learning activities.
  To learn more about how to use technology in learning, you can check out the following resources:
- *Educational blogs and websites:* **Edutopia**[9], **TeacherVision**[10], **Common Sense Education**[11].
- *Social networks for teachers:* Twitter, Facebook (teacher groups).
- *Webinars and online conferences*: Attend events dedicated to integrating technology into education.

10. Impact monitoring:
   − Periodic surveys to collect feedback on the clarity of the materials.
Example: After implementation, ask participants if the materials are easier to use.
Periodic evaluation:
• Every six months after implementation, ask for feedback through surveys.
Example: "Were the materials more accessible? What could we improve?"
Comparison of results:
• Measure comprehension or success rates before and after applying clear language.
Example: Compare the percentage of participants who successfully completed a task before and after the new guidelines were applied.

Results
1. Improved understanding of educational materials:

• Trainers will create clearer and more accessible course materials, reducing confusion and the need for clarification.
Example: After implementing plain language, 85% of participants report that the materials are easy to understand, compared to 60% before adaptation.

2. Improved inclusion:
• Simplified messages will help participants from diverse backgrounds, including those with learning difficulties or language barriers, to actively engage in the educational process.
Example: Beginner teachers in rural areas, who previously struggled with technical terms, will now access clear explanations and practical examples.

3. Creating a replicable methodological framework:
• The guide will become a standard in the continuous training of teachers and can be adapted for other educational areas.
Example: The guide is used to adapt materials for other courses, such as "Classroom Management" or "Digital Technologies in Teaching".

4. Increasing Teaching Efficiency:
• Reduced clarification time allows for better time management and greater focus on practical applications.
Example: Instead of 15 minutes for additional explanations, this time is used for interactive activities.

5. Integration of technology in education:
 • The digital resources created, such as interactive modules and clarity checking applications, will be available to all trainers.
Example: an e-learning platform offers interactive modules based on a simple language that trainers can download and customize.

6. Developing a community of practice:
• Trainers will collaborate and share examples and solutions for using simple language in various contexts.
Example: An online group allows trainers to upload examples of adapted materials and receive feedback.

7. Long-term impact monitoring:
• The implementation of a continuous feedback process will allow adjustments and improvements to the guidelines and resources developed.
Example: After six months, the survey analysis shows that trainers feel a 30% increase in the effectiveness of their courses.

Expected impact
1. Improving learning outcomes:
The implementation of clear language techniques will increase teachers' understanding and

engagement during training sessions, leading to better educational practices in classrooms.

2. Increasing inclusion:
By addressing the diverse needs of teachers, the project ensures equal benefits for all participants, regardless of their level of experience or training.

3. Scalability and Replicability:
The methodology developed through this guide can be applied in other training contexts, making it a versatile tool for continuous professional development at different educational levels.

4. Professional development of trainers:
Trainers will acquire advanced skills in communication and instructional design, improving their ability to deliver impactful and engaging training sessions.

5. Sustainability:
The methodological framework and resources provided are designed to be adaptable and regularly updated, ensuring long-term applicability and relevance in teacher training programmes.

6. Improved efficiency:
Reducing the time spent on clarifications and misunderstandings allows trainers to focus more on interactive activities and practical applications, maximizing the impact of each training session.

7. Strengthening the educational ecosystem:
The results of the project will contribute to a more efficient and coherent system of professional development, ultimately benefiting students through better teaching practices.

Online resources for the content creators:

1. https://accessibledigitallearning.org/resource/making-lessons-accessible-to-all-learners/ Teacher's guide: How to make learning materials accessible , accesat la 19.11.2024 - Acest ghid oferă sfaturi pentru a face materialele de învățare mai incluzive, aplicând principiile de Design Universal pentru Învățare (UDL).

2. https://elearningindustry.com/instructional-design-for-accessibility-free-technical-article - Learning Is For Everyone: Instructional Design For Accessibility , accesat la 19.11.2024 - Un articol tehnic gratuit care examinează problemele legate de accesibilitate și eLearning, oferind ghiduri pentru designul accesibil.

3. https://www.washington.edu/doit/tutorial-making-online-learning-accessible-students-disabilities - A Tutorial for Making Online Learning Accessible to Students with Disabilities , accesat la 19.11.2024 - Un tutorial care oferă instrucțiuni pentru a face cursurile online accesibile pentru toți studenții, inclusiv cei cu dizabilități.

4. https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/teaching-guides/inclusive-teaching-guide/planning-inclusive-course/designing-accessible-course - Designing an Accessible Course - Teaching Commons , accesat la 19.11.2024 - Resurse pentru facultate și personalul didactic despre cum să planifice și să creeze cursuri accesibile.

5. https://accessibledigitallearning.org/resource/making-lessons-accessible-to-all-learners/ - Teacher's guide: How to make learning materials accessible , accesat la 19.11.2024 - Acest ghid oferă sfaturi pentru a face materialele de învățare mai incluzive, aplicând principiile de Design Universal pentru Învățare (UDL).

6. https://dcal.dartmouth.edu/resources/teaching-methods/creating-accessible-materials -Creating Accessible Materials | Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning , accesat la 19.11.2024 - Oferă ghiduri pentru crearea materialelor accesibile și perceptibile pentru o gamă largă de indivizi cu diferențe de percepție.

7. https://www.thinkific.com/blog/how-to-make-online-learning-accessible/ - How to Make Online Learning Accessible: a Guide for Course Creators , accesat la 19.11.2024 - Un ghid detaliat care oferă pași practici pentru a face cursurile online accesibile pentru toți cursanții.

8. https://ciel.viu.ca/building-accessible-course-material - Building Accessible Course Material | Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning , accesat la 19.11.2024 - Resurse pentru crearea de materiale de curs accesibile, inclusiv setări pentru quiz-uri și conținut de curs.

9. https://www.qualitymatters.org/sites/default/files/research-docs-pdfs/QM-Digital-Accessibility-Best-Practices-Tools-WP.pdf - Course Design for Digital Accessibility: Best Practices and Tools , accesat la 19.11.2024 - Oferă instrumente și practici pentru promovarea accesibilității cursurilor online.