

C. Challenges of Texting to the Trainees - Educational Resource created by Pompilia Herman

Context:

City/Country: This material is designed to be used by any organization providing training programs. It was developed to help the team at the Teacher Training Centre in Cluj County (Casa Corpului Didactic Cluj) communicate more effectively with trainees.

Structure: This material is intended for all individuals—methodological advisors and teachers—who communicate with trainees during training activities/programs provided by Casa Corpului Didactic Cluj. It aims to offer a clear methodological framework to regulate the process of drafting and communicating with trainees.

Activity Area: This study addresses some of the communication challenges identified by our methodological advisors throughout the process of delivering training programs. **Identified Needs:**

Effective communication with trainees is essential for promoting and delivering information accurately and in a timely manner. We highlight several key needs for effective communication with trainees, taking into account different levels of understanding:

1. **Message Clarity**
When communicating, the message must be concise and clear. Using simple language enables all trainees to understand it without confusion.
2. **Adaptation to Different Levels of Understanding**
It is important to consider that not all trainees have the same background or experience in accessing information regarding participation in professional and personal development activities.
3. **Empathy and Understanding**
Acknowledging that trainees come from diverse backgrounds and experiences is crucial. Being empathetic helps build trust and long-term collaboration.
4. **Feedback and Encouragement**
Providing timely feedback boosts trainees' confidence, validates their efforts, and motivates them.
5. **Use of Visual Aids**
Incorporating visual aids can enhance understanding. Charts, diagrams, and images can convey messages more efficiently, especially for visual learners.
6. **Creating a Safe Space for Communication**
Fostering an environment where trainees feel safe to share thoughts and ask questions is vital.

Objectives:

1. To improve communication with teachers interested in participating in Casa Corpului Didactic Cluj's activities/programs.
2. To reduce the number of trainees who return with questions about the information received.
3. To use tools and visual aids that simplify and enhance the information.

Target Group:

Pre-university teachers interested in participating in training activities/programs organized by Casa Corpului Didactic Cluj.

Current Situation:

Casa Corpului Didactic Cluj, as a resource and educational management assistance center and continuous training provider (according to Art. 244, paragraph 4 of Law no. 1/2011), constantly communicates with pre-university teachers and auxiliary teaching staff.

Despite our goal of ensuring personal and professional development aligned with professional standards and competencies, achieving this is often difficult.

Identified Communication Deficiencies:

- ✓ Analysis and understanding of factors contributing to poor communication
- ✓ Identification of specific situations where communication breakdowns occur

Our Proposal:

Promoting a collaborative environment to improve communication with trainees. Developing skills to address and rectify communication issues by:

- ✓ Identifying weak communication situations
- ✓ Applying communication improvement strategies
- ✓ Creating simplified communication scenarios to enhance understanding and address obstacles

Adaptation Process:

We start from the premise that plain language communication puts the reader first. For organizations, plain language is a vital way to build trust.

Empathy in Design—putting ourselves in the trainees' shoes—is essential for designing messages and documents tailored to their needs.

Specialized studies recommend certain principles, language rules, and design strategies for more effective communication.

According to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1), communication should meet the following four principles:

1. **Perceivable:** Information and interface components must be presented so that users can perceive them.
2. **Operable:** All interface components must be operable.

3. **Understandable:** Information and interface operation must be easy to comprehend.
4. **Robust:** Content must be robust enough to be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents and assistive technologies.

Proposal for the strategy for improving communication with trainees:

1. Identifying the Target Group and Their Needs

- What they already know and what they need to learn from the document or message.
- The level of interest, expertise, and skills of readers.
- The context in which readers will use the document.

2. Plain Language Rules in Specialized/Professional Texts

- ✓ Organizing documents correctly with appropriate headings and lists; offering alternative text for important images.
- ✓ Ensuring sufficient color contrast between text and graphics.
- ✓ Breaking down complex information into manageable sections, using bullet points or lists.
- ✓ Keeping sentences short and simple—one idea per sentence.
- ✓ Using active voice: e.g., "We will review your proposal" instead of "The proposal will be reviewed."
- ✓ Avoiding jargon and specialized language unless necessary, and explaining technical terms clearly.
- ✓ Using familiar words; avoiding unnecessary adjectives and adverbs.
- ✓ Being consistent with terminology.
- ✓ Framing sentences positively.
- ✓ Using clear references with pronouns, repeating names if necessary.
- ✓ Giving step-by-step instructions when needed.
- ✓ Following the inverted pyramid style—presenting the most important information first.
- ✓ Grouping related information together.

3. Document and Message Design

- ✓ Using easy-to-read, follow, and photocopy formats (e.g., A4 or A5).
- ✓ Keeping document size manageable.
- ✓ Avoiding background designs that make reading difficult.
- ✓ Maintaining ample margins to avoid a cramped look.

4. Writing the Message

- ✓ Using clear, easy-to-read fonts (e.g., Arial, Tahoma).
- ✓ Using large enough text size (minimum Arial 14).

- ✓ Avoiding all-uppercase text.
- ✓ Using only one font type throughout the document.
- ✓ Using underlining sparingly.
- ✓ Avoiding colored text where possible.
- ✓ Avoiding special characters like , & , < , #.
- ✓ Avoiding abbreviations like "e.g." or "etc."
- ✓ Starting each new sentence on a new line.
- ✓ Avoiding word breaks with hyphens.
- ✓ Using bullet points for lists instead of comma-separated words.
- ✓ Leaving space between paragraphs.
- ✓ Avoiding text indentation.
- ✓ Numbering document pages where possible.

Concrete, Debatable Situations Identified in Messages to Trainees:

Unadapted Text	Adapted Text
Do not send the document before...	Please, send the document by...
Dear colleagues, Thank you for registering for the "Open Educational Resources and the Reading" training program.	Dear colleagues, Thank you for registering for the "Open Educational Resources and the Reading" training program.
I inform you that the activities will start on Thursday, April 18, at 16:00 online. We will have three synchronous sessions, on April 18, 22, and 24, from 16:00 to 20:00, and two asynchronous sessions for the evaluation portfolio.	There will be three synchronous meetings on April 18, 22, and 24 between 16:00-20:00, and two asynchronous meetings for the evaluation portfolio.
I will send the participation link on April 17.	I will send the participation link on April 17.
If you have not already paid the registration fee, please do it by April 9.	Please pay the registration fee by April 9.
If your school covers the cost, please complete the contract sent to you.	If your school covers the cost, please complete the attached contract.
If you are paying by yourself, an invoice is not necessary. You can pay via: - Bank/postal order to the CCDCluj account. - Via the www.ghiseul.ro platform. - Using the POS device with the career bonus card.	There are three options for the payment: 1. Bank or postal order to CCD Cluj account; 2. The online platform www.ghiseul.ro ; 3. POS, using the career bonus card.

Unadapted Text	Adapted Text
For any questions, feel free to call me. Thank you!	Please call if you have any questions. Thank you!
Dear colleagues, Attached you will find the file "CDIdeas in Books" Festival, with the teams registered until April 3, 2024 and the schools with no registered teams.	Dear colleagues, Attached you will find the file "CDIdeas in Books" Festival, with the registered teams.
Good news: the registration deadline has been extended to April 7, 2024! Teams can register by filling out this form: Registration Form. Please encourage your colleagues to register their teams promptly.	Good news: the registration deadline has been extended to April 7, 2024 Teams can be registered by using this link: https://forms.gle/RqZtPXEPTYdu9Mei8 Please encourage your colleagues to register their teams promptly. Thank you!

Expected Results:

- ✓ Simplified communication improves message understanding, training needs identification, and participant motivation.
- ✓ Accessible language strengthens relationships between CCD Cluj and its collaborators, the future trainees.
- ✓ Accessible professional collaboration communication creates a more inclusive environment.
- ✓ Simplifying complex terminology and ensuring clarity leads to more effective collaboration.
- ✓ Plain language allows all readers, regardless of expertise, to understand the message, resulting in greater productivity.
- ✓ Fewer communication errors and a higher satisfaction rate among information/message recipients.

Bibliography:

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- Teacher's guide: How to make learning materials accessible
- ISO/FDIS 24495-1:2023(E)
- OM 5554/2011, art. 7
- https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/EN_Information_for_all.pdf, accesat la 13.11.2024