

Editors' Association of Canada—2017 Guardians of the Lexicons Conference
Laura Edlund —*Editing for Plain Language, Levelled Reading, and Various Reader Profiles: A Scenario Approach*

Saturday, June 10 — 11:15-12:15

Editing for plain language is not a one-size-fits-all type of editing. The task depends on the specific reader profile, the subject, and the goals for the communication. In this interactive session, Laura Edlund will take a scenario-based approach to editing for plain language for developing readers, for ABE (Adult Basic Education) students, about technical subjects, and for publication in multiple languages.

PLAIN web site definition:

A communication is in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information. *Source: International Plain Language Federation*

Process

1. define/understand in detail:
 - the target reader (who)
 - the purpose of the publication (why)
 - the subject (what)
 - the publication's parameters (how)and use these as criteria throughout
2. then [write, revise, edit] considering not only the language and sentence structure, but also subject focus, examples, publication method and delivery, design, visuals where there are options
3. then evaluate the [writing, revision, edit, layout and visuals] against the criteria, including getting user feedback (focus group, reviewers, pilot, etc.)
4. then refine
5. then publish

Scenarios

1. children's book about plants, for young children, early readers
2. ABE students about healthcare/service, specifically introductory book for students re-entering the work force by training as personal support workers
3. government employees—internal newsletter for one government department and on a specific theme about communication; to be published in the official languages

Selected Resources

- *Editing Canadian English*, Editors' Association of Canada, 3rd edition, "Plain language" section 2.6, and sections to do with editorial niches such as 13.2.6 "Editing children's and young adult fiction" and "Simplifying language" 13.2.6.2
- *Oxford Guide to Plain English*, Martin Cutts, 4th edition, 2013
- Canadian Style online, Section 13 "Plain Language"
<<http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tcdnstyl-chap?lang=eng&lettr=chapsect13&info0=13>>
- Plain Language Association International (PLAIN,
<plainlanguagenetwork.org)
- *Plain Language Clear and Simple*, which can be accessed via Iva Cheung's blog
<<http://www.ivacheung.com/2014/03/plain-language-clear-and-simple/>>
- Cheryl Stephens' publications and web site web site—for example, *Plain Language in Plain English* and <<http://www.plainlanguage.com/the-plain-facts.html>>
- Dominique Joseph's work, including an interview with her in Iva Cheung's blog
<<http://www.ivacheung.com/2014/07/dominique-joseph-on-translation-and-the-plain-language-writing-process/>>
- International Consortium for Clear Communication
(<<https://www.openeducationeuropa.eu/en/project/ic-clear> >)
- *How to Write Clearly*, European Union, available for download at
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/en_GB/-/EUR/ViewPublication-Start?PublicationKey=HC3212148 >
- *The Centre for Literacy*, "Plain Language: Tips, Tools, and Tutorials" web page
<<http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/node/188> >

- range of dictionaries – from standard dictionaries (CanOx, Merriam Webster Collegiate, etc.) to children’s dictionaries, to specialized subject dictionaries—such as the following:
Gage Canadian Dictionary, Intermediate edition, 1991.
Oxford Dictionary of Ecology, Oxford Dictionary of Plant Sciences
- for visual information and re. illustrations—use a range of materials, including, *The Firefly Visual Dictionary*, Jean-Claude Corbeil, Ariane Archambault. 2002.
- reading levels—see: Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell
The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum: A Tool for Assessment, Planning, and Teaching, expanded edition, 2017, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH.
 <http://www.fountasandpinnell.com/shared/resources/FP_FPL_Resource_The-Fountas-and-Pinnell-Story_v2015-11.pdf>
 and Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Books Website, about levelled texts for children learning how to read and the history of this research
 (<<http://www.fountasandpinnellleveledbooks.com/aboutLeveledTexts.aspx>>) and Publisher information web page
<http://www.fountasandpinnellleveledbooks.com/publishers.aspx>
- Scholastic summary of reading levels in different systems
http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/guidedreading/leveling_chart.htm
- information about readability tests and an overview of various tests
 < <http://wordcount.info/readability.html>>
- about Gunning-Fog <http://gunning-fog-index.com>
- about the SMOG index< <http://webpages.charter.net/ghal/SMOG.htm> >
- online tools using them, such as:
 < http://wordcount.info/wc/jsp/clear/analyze_smog.jsp>
 <<https://readable.io/?gclid=CNS1-7XFhNQCFZ22wAodm9ELOw> >
 < <https://www.webpagefx.com/tools/read-able/> >
 < https://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp>

- Clear index calculator
<http://wordscount.info/wc/jsp/clear/analyze_clear.jsp>
<<http://wordscount.info/readability.html>>
- official languages in Canada, resources for Canadian provinces and territories
http://www.officiallanguages.gc.ca/en/language_rights/provinces_territories
- reading levels in Spanish — see Fountas & Pinnell system
- reading levels in Inuktitut— see <http://inhabitededucation.com/nunavummi-reading-series/>
- vocabulary by age—see children’s book store sections or library sections, see varied curriculum, or see *Children’s Writer’s Word Book*, 2nd ed., Alijandra Mogilner & Tayopa Mogilner, Writer’s Digest Books.
- sample curriculum for school materials or to have an idea of what children might be learning at certain grades, ages, stages – for example,
Ontario < <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/curriculum.html> >
British Columbia
< <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/curriculum>>
Nova Scotia
<<https://sapps.ednet.ns.ca/Cart/index.php?UID=MjdNYXkyMDE3MjMwMzM5NzAuNTAuMTQwLjY=>>
US Common Core Standards for Math and English/Language Arts
< <http://www.corestandards.org/read-the-standards/> >

Draft: All about plants

Contents

Introduction ...00
How plants grow....00
Different plants...00
Plants around you....00
How to look after plants ...00
Glossary ...00

Introduction

Plants are all around you! If you look outside, you will see flowers, trees, and grass. When you eat your lunch, you eat fruits and veggies, which are plants as well. Even the bread for your sandwich is made from plants.

How do plants grow? What different types of plants are there? What are your favourites? And how can we look after plants? This book will help you answer those questions.

How Plants Grow

Plants have roots, stems, leaves and stems. Many plants have flowers. Some plants have cones or berries. Plants grow from seeds and usually make new seeds to grow more plants.

This is one type of plant and the main parts labeled.

<diagram to come/TK>

Plants grow from seeds. Each plant needs water, nutrients from the soil, and sunshine to grow.

Imagine planting a seed in the soil. Next, water the soil. And then wait for the plant to grow up through the soil and toward the sun.

Plants grow with the help of an amazing scientific process called **photosynthesis**. They convert energy from the sun (sunshine) into energy that can help the plant grow using chlorophyll. “What is chlorophyll?” you say. Chlorophyll is what makes a plant green in colour.

Different Plants

What different types of plants do you see each day in your neighbourhood? In this picture, there are flowers in baskets and flowerbeds, trees in the park, bushes in the gardens, and food for sale at the market.

<illustration with labels to come/TK> ...

[260 words]

Criteria for *All About Plants*

- children's book about plants
- for young children
- early readers
- for kindergarten
- for guided reading

from Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, *The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum: A Tool for Assessment, Planning, and Teaching*, expanded edition, 2017, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH

F&P level A criteria include:

genre

- realistic fiction
- simple animal fantasy
- simple factual texts
- some series books
- picture books

text structure

- very simple narrative carried by pictures

content

- interesting to and relevant for young children
- familiar, easy content—e.g., family and home, play, pets, school, food, community, seasons
- all content directly and explicitly supported by picture information

themes and ideas

- themes reflecting everyday life—e.g., friendships, family relationships, nature
- clear, simple ideas easy to identify
- ideas close to children's experience—e.g., sharing with others, noticing our world

language and literary features

- simple language patterns that are close to oral language
- repeating language patterns
- familiar settings close to children's experience

sentence complexity

- short, predictable sentences (usually three to six words) that are close to oral language

language

- simple sentences (subject and predicate, no embedded phrases or clauses)
- a few sentences with adjectives

vocabulary

- a few words that are new to children but easy to understand in context
- a few very simple adjectives describing people, places, or things

words

- mostly one-, two-, or three-syllable words fully supported by the pictures
- some simple plurals using –s or –es
- repeated use of a few easy high-frequency words: e.g., *is, it, I am, the, here, look*

illustrations

- clear illustrations that fully support meaning
- very simple illustrations with no distracting detail
- a few labeled photographs
- book and print features

length

- short, usually sixteen pages (eight pages of print)
- typically fewer than fifty words per book

print and layout

- print in large, plain font,
- print always on white or very pale background
- one line of text on each page
- sentences beginning on the left
- consistent placement of print
- exaggerated spaces between words

punctuation

- period the only punctuation in most texts

F&P level C criteria include:

genre

- realistic fiction
- simple retellings of folktales
- simple animal fantasy
- simple factual text
- some easy procedural texts

text structure

- very simple narratives with beginning, middle, several episodes, and end
- texts with repetition of more than one event and language pattern
- texts with underlying structural patterns: simple description, temporal sequence (nonfiction)

content

- content interesting to and relevant for young children
- familiar, easy content—e.g., family and home, play, pets, animals, school, food, communities
- most content directly and explicitly supported by picture information

themes and ideas

- themes reflecting everyday life—e.g., relationships with family and others, self, nature, similarities and differences

- clear simple idea easy to identify
- ideas close to children's experience

language and literary features

- simple language patterns that are close to oral language
- repeating language patterns
- familiar settings close to children's experience
- very simple procedural language

sentence complexity

- short sentences, usually five to ten words
- more than one sentence pattern repeated in the same book
- simple sentences with subject and predicate
- some sentences with clauses or phrases
- some sentences that are questions
- some sentences with dialogue

vocabulary

- a few words that are new to children but easy to understand in context
- words for sounds (onomatopoeic)
- concept words illustrated by pictures

words

- mostly one-, two, and three-syllable words fully supported by the pictures
- repeated use of a few easy high-frequency words—e.g., *and, to, up, said, the, here, look, is, it, me, he*

illustrations

- clear illustrations that fully support meaning
- illustrations on every page or page spread
- a few labeled photographs or illustrations

book and print features

length

- short, usually sixteen pages (eight of print)
- typically fewer than 100 words per book

print and layout

- print in large, plain font
- print always on white or very pale background
- two to five lines of text on each page
- sentences beginning on the left
- sentences turn over one or more lines
- many texts with layout supporting phrasing

punctuation

- use of period, comma, question mark, exclamation mark, and quotation marks
- ellipses in some texts to indicate that the sentence finishes on the next page

Draft: Personal support work training manual

Introduction

For those seeking re-entry into employment, there are many job opportunities as personal support workers for elderly people in their homes and in institutions.

Jobs as personal support workers for older people will vary according to each client's needs, but support often involves working in the client's home to provide help with activities of daily living (ADL), basic nursing assistance, monitoring to see if the client's needs change, communication with the client, agency, and family members, and providing first aid, and/or calling for emergency services if needed.

In this manual you will find 8 chapters in which we cover the basics of what a PSW needs to know and do to work in this exciting field. In these chapters, you will find an introduction to each chapter, sections about topics, summaries for each section, definitions for key terms in the margin, optional focus articles to explore some issues in greater depth, examples to discuss and respond to in groups, topics for essays or presentations, and questions at the end of each chapter.

...

[From chapter 8]

Case Study 8B

Rose is 84 and lives on her own in her own home. No cognitive decline has been noted in Rose. You provide support for physical disabilities and for companionship. Rose has arthritis, which she experiences most severely in her knees and hands; she uses a wheeled walker on the main floor and has grab bars in her bedroom and bathroom. Rose restricts her movement to the main floor. You provide support each weekday morning with bathing, hygiene, grooming, preparing meals, and morning medications. (Synthroid—orange—25 mcg/d, Tylenol/extra strength acetaminophen—red—2 x 500 mg/d) As the agency requires for Rose, you take and record regular blood pressure readings.

On Wednesday morning, you note the following in Rose: unusual level of tiredness, relative weakness in left arm while using walker, BP140/100 mm/HG (past: 110/80 mm/HG).

1. Describe *your* immediate actions, next steps, and reasons.
2. Describe what steps you anticipate would be taken regarding Rose's care plan.

Government department, internal newsletter

- for all government employees for the province, with a range of roles and educational backgrounds
- promoting a general theme of effective communication and some specific aspects of this from one department
- to include recognition of specific employees
- must have branding for the department
- to be published in the official languages
- to be a cohesive newsletter

sample manuscript

DSU Unit Rolls Out CS 2017

The DSU unit is proud to announce the rollout of 2017 Communication support in all jurisdictions and across multiple platforms. The rollout will take place in stages as we beta test and optimize: April 1—CS 2017 region 5; May 1—CS 2017 region 2; June 1—CS 2017 region 3; July 5—CS 2017 region 5; August 2—CS 2017 region 4. “CS 2017 will improve interface and increase efficiencies going forward, making it a real game-changer for all stakeholders. Indeed, as we ramp up, we foresee greater bandwidth and connectivity,” says deputy minister John Northman.