

Training Health Care Providers in Plain Language



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Audrey Riffenburgh, M.A.
President, Riffenburgh & Associates
P.O. Box 6670, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA
Phone: (505) 345-1107 E-mail: ar@plainlanguageworks.com
Specialists in Plain Language & Health Literacy

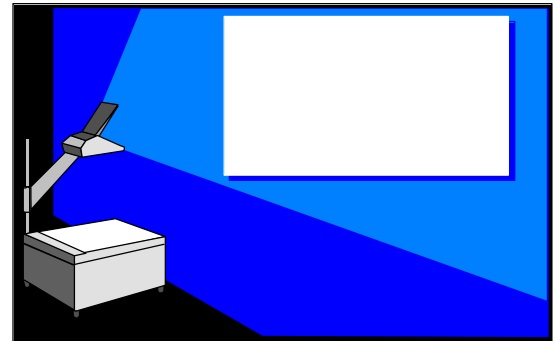
Is There A Need for Easier to Read Health Materials?

- In the U.S., the majority of health care materials are far too difficult for most adults.
- Using our complex health care systems requires a higher degree of literacy than ever before.
- Most health care providers and systems still rely on print to communicate with their patients.



How Can Health Care Providers Learn More?

- Books
- Information on websites
- On-line training modules
- Get a few pointers from short conference presentations or workshops
- Attend brief awareness sessions
- Attend in-depth skills-building workshops



Four Different Models



Type of Session

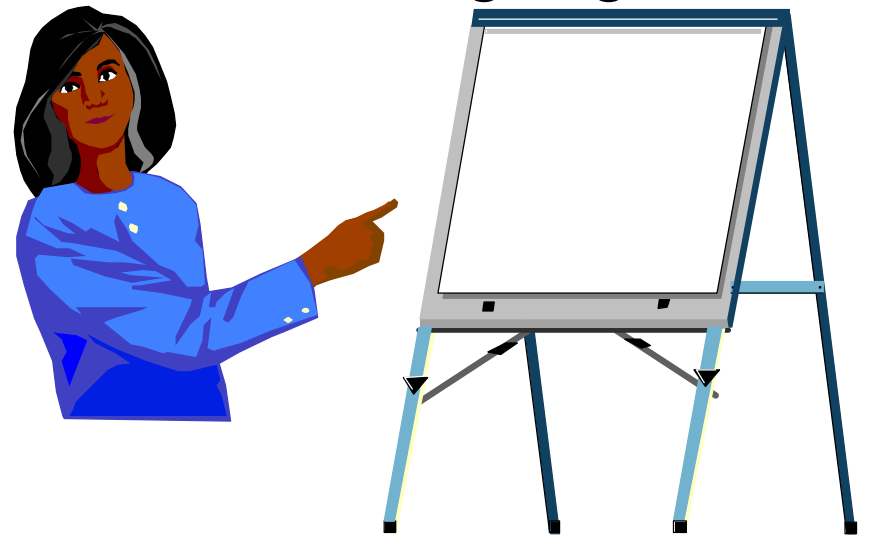
- Awareness sessions
- Beginning skills training
- In-depth skills training
- Follow-up coaching sessions

Approximate Time

- Less than one day
- One day
- Two to three days
- A few hours to one day after the in-depth training

What is the Health Literacy Institute?

- A three-day intensive workshop on creating plain language health materials with impact
- Offered in Maine every summer for 12 years
- Offered in New Mexico in fall of 2001 and 2002
- Trainers are members of the Clear Language Group, a national U.S. consortium
- Over 450 people trained



What Do We Cover in the In-depth Training Institutes



- Definition of health literacy
- The need for easy-to-read health care materials
- Planning and organizing new or revised pieces
- Writing in plain language
- Using readability formulas *appropriately*
- Design and layout principles for reading ease
- Pre-testing and field testing
- Cultural appropriateness

Our Purpose in Training

- Equip participants to improve the materials they create and also to choose more effective materials for purchase
- Prepare participants to cope with resistance to plain language
- Prepare participants to advocate for plain language “back home”



Our Evaluation Plans



- Began with self-assessed improvement of knowledge and qualitative analysis of comments
- Want to collect more objective data about improved skills
- Planning to use pre- and post-test data collection next

Sample Evaluation Question

The Scale:

1 is very little or very low

5 is a great deal or very high

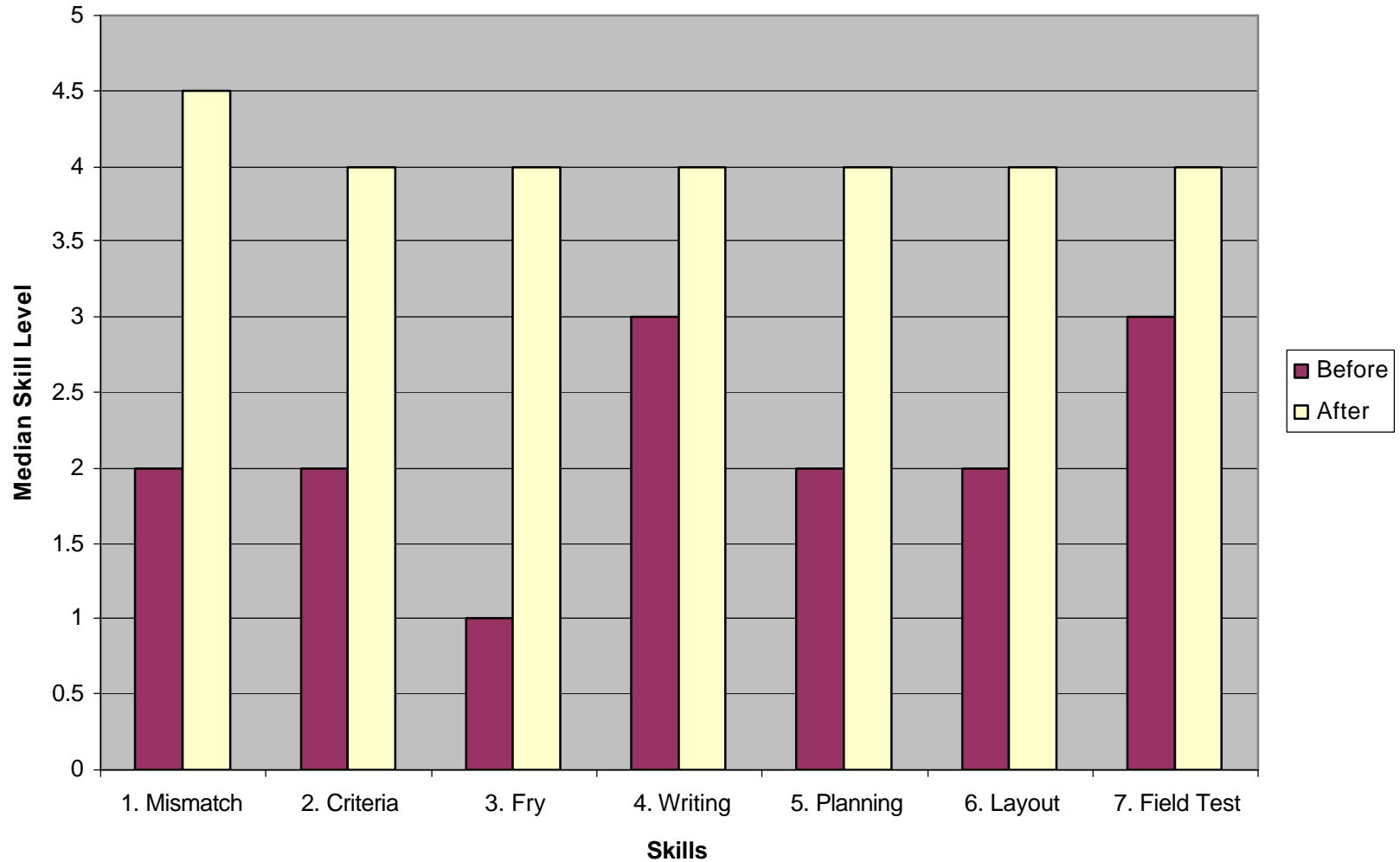
Learning objectives:

1. Define the literacy/health literacy problem in the U.S. and the mismatch between the public levels and the levels of most health materi

Beginning knowledge/skills 1 2 3

Ending knowledge/skills 1 2 3

Median Self-Assessed Skill Levels for Two Institutes



Participants Don't Know How Much They Need this Information



- “I didn’t realize I needed this information until I attended the seminar. I was shocked at how much I had to learn! I have used this information and your materials over and over again. The new skills I learned are now a permanent part of my writing process.”

**Wanda A. Morgan, PhD, RD
Assistant Professor of Human Nutrition
New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM**



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www.clearlanguagegroup.com

Audrey is President of Riffenburgh & Associates, a consulting and training firm specializing in health literacy and plain language. She is also a founding member of The Clear Language Group, which specializes in health literacy, plain language, and cross-cultural communications. Audrey has a Master's degree in Adult Learning and 15 years' experience in teaching and managing adult basic education programs.