

DWE NEWSLETTER

September 2011



Introduction: Hello readers! Welcome to our newsletter. I have recently been to an information session to hear about SCOPE's new 'communication access' symbol. It's a great addition to the recognised suite of disability specific symbols and we hope it becomes internationally recognised. The theme of this month's newsletter is about communication with all people and especially people who have a disability and those who have speech or cognitive issues.

Any feedback or contributions are most welcome.

Our news:

I have been delivering Disability Awareness workshops around the State for several years now and one of the key issues people face is communication with people with a disability – especially those with a communication impairment. I have adjusted a part of my standard presentation to focus more on communication with some experiential exercises on effective ways to communicate effectively and respectfully.

As well as the Disability Awareness workshops, we also provide a 2 or 3 hour workshop on 'Writing for the Community' which focuses on content and presentation using Simple English and Vision Australia Guidelines. This workshop is about communicating with people with a print disability or for people who need 'accessible information'.

There seems to be differences of opinion 'out there' in regards to the differences between Simple English or Easy English and EasyRead. This is my interpretation of it:

- 'EasyRead' = specifically designed for people with an intellectual impairment and uses basic graphics, 'pictograms' or symbols with very little written information. Communication boards also use this method. 'EasyRead' is usually identified on the front of booklets with either of these symbols.
- 'Simple English' = is often referred to as 'Easy English' (but can be mistaken for 'EasyRead' so I like to refer to it as 'Simple English') and is a less jargonised or 'academic' version of English that meets the average literacy level of any given community (year 8-9 equivalent) and easy to understand for most people in the community.



Our workshop is aimed at staff that provide written information to the general community and may include:

- Media people
- Desktop publishers
- Graphic designers
- Staff who prepare information for the public or clients
- Web designers
- Event managers
- Writers in any industry.

If you get the literacy level right and the presentation right then you are presenting '*accessible information*'!

People who will benefit from 'accessible information' include people with:

- Dyslexia
- English as a second language, who sometimes prefer simple English
- Mild to moderate vision impairment
- Intellectual impairment or a learning disability
- Moderate degree of Parkinson's disease
- Alzheimer and related cognitive issues.

Did you know?

The Word Program can identify how readable your information is and give you a score according to school year level? This is how you set it up:

Microsoft Word Plain English check

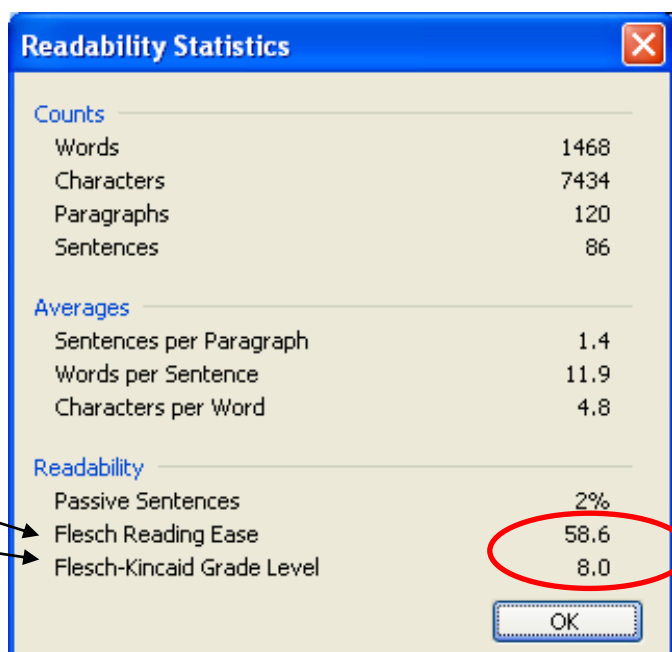
A simple set up whereby Microsoft Word automatically checks your spelling, grammar and readability. You should try to check the readability scores for every document you produce for the community.

Reading ease score

This rates text on a 100-point scale – the higher the score, the easier it is to understand your document. Your score must be at least 50 for most standard documents.

Grade level score

This rates content based on American (and Australian) school grades – for example a score of 8.0 = year 8 level of education. Your score must be no higher than 10 for most standard documents. If the score is higher, edit and recheck until it decreases.



By the way, this newsletter's score: 'reading ease' score = 67% and grade level = 7.9!

How to set up Microsoft Word readability statistics:

Word 2003

Word 2007 or 2010

Word 2003	Word 2007 or 2010
1. Go to Word	1. Go to Word
2. Click on tools	2. Go to review tab
3. Spelling and grammar (or the spelling - ABC icon)	3. Spelling and grammar icon
4. Click on options	4. Click on options
5. Click on settings	5. See heading: 'when correcting spelling in grammar in word.'
6. Tick every box, click ok	6. Tick every box, including 'show readability stats'
7. Click 'recheck document'	7. Same as Word 2003 from here
8. Dialog box will appear that says	

'spelling & grammar check complete', click ok

9. Dialog box will appear that says 'readability stats', tick it
10. Look at the bottom of the box for Flesch-kincaid grade level score and pray that your document scores 8.0 or less!

Communication impairment:

Of all disabilities, this area is the least understood. Did you know that 1 in 500 people need a communication aid? It is very frustrating for people with active brains not to be able to communicate easily.

SCOPE's new 'Communication Access' Symbol indicates that the organisation displaying the symbol have skills to communicate with people who have communication issues. The formal launch of the symbol will be on November 17th.



This symbol cannot be used unless a 'communication audit' has been undertaken by a person with a communication impairment through SCOPE. For more details contact SCOPE's Communication Resource Centre on 1800 888 824 or e-mail crc@scopevic.org.au or visit www.scopevic.org.au.

Ten top tips to communicate with people with a communication impairment:

1. **Never** presume that a person who is nonverbal does not understand what you are saying.
2. Talk in a quiet environment if possible, discuss one idea at a time and have pen and paper available if needed.
3. Listen carefully, be patient and don't take over the conversation.
4. Don't be afraid to ask the person to repeat themselves, or ask them to rephrase with different words if you can't understand - they would be aware their speech is hard to understand.
5. Ask the person 'closed' questions (i.e. those that require a "yes" or "no" answer).
6. If the person is using a communication aid, refrain from reading the screen as they type and be patient – typing words can take time.
7. Don't pretend to understand if you haven't.
8. Acknowledge if you have not been successful despite all efforts and ask if there is someone nearby to interpret for you or if there are other ways to they could communicate.
9. Don't forget to use other methods like gestures, some sign language, body language, spelling out words or writing and remind yourself to get a communication board made up for future use!
10. Don't talk 'baby talk' or raise your voice – communication issues and deafness are not necessarily connected!

Event in Golden Plains Shire:

Disability Family Day for families of children with Disabilities, Sunday 23rd October, 2011, 11am – 3pm at the Lethbridge Sport and Recreation Complex, Stephenson St, Lethbridge

The day will include many activities:

Harley rides, Animal Farm, Jumping Castles, Live Music, Juke Box Rockers, Eric the Red, Massages, Train Rides, Pony Rides, Catering, Face Painting, Shearing Display, Stilt Walkers, Craft, Plus much, much more!

To RSVP: call Kaylene 03 5281 7553

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