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# G

## uide to Evaluating Written Nutrition Education Materials

Written nutrition materials should be evaluated before using them in educational activities. Evaluation enables you to use limited budget and time wisely, deliver accurate nutrition information, and increase your effectiveness. Using a consistent process for evaluation aids your decision-making. This guide describes a four-step process to help you select the right materials for your nutrition education programs.

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### Step one

#### Assess the needs of your target audience

Three questions need to be answered before you begin to evaluate written materials:

- Who is your target audience?
- What do you want the target audience to learn or be able to do?
- What are the best methods for reaching the target audience?

The more clearly you can answer these three questions, the better you will be able to evaluate and choose the best written materials to achieve your educational goals.

#### *Who is your target audience?*

Basic demographic information will help you define the target audience. This information may include age range, gender, income level, race, ethnicity, language, educational level, occupation, place of residence, family structure, and lifestyle. Basic demographic information is usually easy to obtain from program statistics or community demographic information.

Depending upon the nature of your educational activities, you may have only one target audience that is very homogeneous, or you may have multiple target audiences with different demographic characteristics. You may find that you need different materials to address the unique needs of each target audience you work with.

#### *What do you want the target audience to learn or be able to do?*

Clear and precise teaching objectives help you determine what you want your target audience to learn from the written materials you provide. Information about the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, or skills of the target audience will help you decide at what point in the learning process you want to intervene. For example, you might select different materials depending upon whether your objective is to increase knowledge or develop a skill. Consider the following questions:

- What do audience members already know about a specific nutrition topic? What new information do you want them to learn?
- How do they feel about this topic? Is this an attitude you want to change or enhance?
- What are their current practices or behaviors in relation to this topic? Are these practices you want to change or enhance? Are there specific cultural practices related to this topic?
- What barriers do they have in relationship to the new behavior you want them to adopt?
- What skills do they currently possess? What new skills do you want to build?

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You may already have first-hand knowledge to answer these questions if you work closely with a particular target audience. Advisory boards or other professionals who have close contact with the target audience can provide further information. Research literature can provide insights, but should not be relied upon as the sole source of information. If program budget and time are not constraints, focus groups and in-depth interviews with members of the target audience provide excellent information.

*What are the best methods for reaching the target audience?*

Once you know whom you want to reach and what you want to teach, determine the best methods for achieving your objectives. Find out how the target audience prefers to receive information. Also consider whether you will use the written materials alone or with other educational materials and methods.

## Step two

### Evaluate the written nutrition education material

The *Written Nutrition Education Materials Review Form* (SP 120) will help you evaluate materials using a consistent process and criteria. The review form is divided into five sections:

- Source information
- Reading and comprehension level
- Content
- Design and quality
- Review summary

*Source information*

The first page includes descriptive information about the source of the written material. Gathering and recording this information will help you retrieve these details quickly and easily when you need to order materials or share recommendations with other nutrition educators.

The next three sections of the form are in a checklist format. Check a yes, no, or not applicable for each criterion. Space is provided for comments at the bottom of each section to provide more explanation about your answers.

*Reading and comprehension level*

Different factors contribute to whether an individual can read and then comprehend written information. Assessing the reading level of written materials determines the approximate educational level a person must have to understand the material. There are various methods for assessing reading level, which include the Fry Graph Reading Level Index and the SMOG Readability Formula. Each method has strengths and weaknesses, so it is important to remember that reading level assessment is just an approximation. Pretesting the materials with the target audience will provide additional information.

Reading level assessment does not determine the comprehension level of the material. The remaining criteria in this section of the form will help you evaluate factors that contribute to comprehension:

- Is the purpose of the material clearly evident?
- Are the words familiar and easy to understand?
- Are the sentences simple, short, specific, and in the active voice?
- Are the main ideas clear in each paragraph?
- Does the overall organization of the key concepts contribute to understanding?
- Is the tone of the material personal, positive, and respectful?

*Content*

Evaluating the content of written materials goes beyond whether the information is accurate. This section of the form will help you evaluate the following:

- Is the information credible?
- Is the information appropriate for the target audience?
- Does the information address target audience needs and concerns?
- Are recipes used appropriately to teach recommended food behaviors?

Content is the most critical factor when determining whether you will use a particular written material in your nutrition education program.

**Design and quality** The graphics, text, and white space on written materials determine whether the material attracts and keeps attention. Used effectively, these design elements also aid in readability and comprehension. The section of the form helps you answer these questions:

- Does the paper allow you to easily read the text?
- Does the use of color enhance and not detract from the text?
- Is the type size and style legible?
- Do the illustrations relate to the information conveyed?
- Are tables, charts, and graphs clear and easy to read and used appropriately?
- Is the overall layout organized and balanced?

The reading and comprehension level, content, design, and quality work together to determine the appropriateness of the written educational material. Accuracy of the content is an overriding factor in making your decision. However, assuming that the content is accurate, consider all of the factors as a whole to determine whether you will purchase a particular written publication for the target audience and educational objectives you identified in the first step.

**Review summary** The review summary is located on the first page along with the source information for easy reference. However, it is filled in after the review is completed. This section helps you document who conducted the review, the target audience of the written material, whether the material is acceptable for use, and whether you purchased the material.

It is important for you to determine the target audience for the material, and not rely on the producer's suggestion. You may determine during the review process that the material is appropriate for a different target audience than the one suggested. The next step—pretesting the material—will help further determine whether it is appropriate for your target audience.

It is possible that you decide the material is acceptable to the target audience, but choose not to purchase it due to budget or other considerations. The review summary allows you to note this.

It is helpful to organize your review forms along with the actual material. One method is to put the review forms in a notebook, with topic headings that make sense to you. Or file them alphabetically by title or chronologically by the year of production. Develop a method that works for you and use it consistently.

## Step three

### **Pretest the materials with your target audience**

Pretesting gathers reactions to written materials from representative members of the target audience. Pretest results help you determine whether you have selected the right written materials for your target audience and whether they will help you achieve your desired educational objectives. Pretesting answers questions about whether the materials are:

- understandable,
- credible,
- appropriate,
- useful,
- attractive,
- attention-getting, and
- acceptable to the target audience.

There are several pretesting methods. **Self-administered questionnaires** are quick and inexpensive. Mail or distribute short questionnaires along with the educational materials to the target audience. A minimum of twenty questionnaires is recommended, although 100 to 200 is ideal. If the material is complex in terms of length, content, and diversity of the target audience, include more people in the pretest.

**Individual interviews** involve showing the educational materials to individuals and asking a short list of structured questions about the materials. This method is cost effective if a large number of people can be interviewed in a short amount of time. Fifty interviews may be enough if most of the respondents feel similarly about the materials. If there are substantial disagreements or differences between respondents, conduct additional interviews until there is clear direction from the respondents. Again, if the material is complex in length, content, and diversity of the target audience, include more people in the pretest.

Interviews are often more appropriate than written questionnaires for pretesting with low literate audiences. Make sure they know that the *material* is being tested, not *them*.

If funds are not available for extensive pretesting, some pretesting with even five to ten individuals is essential to ensure materials are understandable and culturally relevant. If pretesting is not feasible, continuously analyze the feedback from clients when you use the materials. Is the material reaching the audience you intended? Does the material help you achieve your teaching objectives? If you answer no to these questions, look for other materials that better meet the needs of your target audience.

## Step four

### Use your materials effectively

Now that you have carefully selected your written materials, use them effectively in your nutrition education activities. Resist the temptation to hand out several different titles about the same topic. It is better to select one piece of written material that best meets clients' needs.

Before you hand out written material, take the time to preview the information thoroughly. Knowing the content well prepares you for follow-up questions.

Be sure to introduce the material and describe to your clients how the information can help them make healthy food choices. Individualize the recommendations by pointing to, highlighting, or circling the most important information when working individually with a client.

Finally, take the time to set goals for behavior change. Encourage clients to write their goal directly on the written material to refer to later.



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Written by Connie Betterley, MS, RD, LD, EFNEP coordinator, Iowa State University Extension, and Brenda Dobson, MS, RD, LD, WIC nutrition services coordinator, Iowa Department of Public Health. Edited by Carol Ouverson, communication specialist, ISU Extension.

This publication is written for use with:

Written Nutrition Education Materials Review Form (SP 120)

Also available are:

- Guide to Evaluating Audiovisual Nutrition Education Programs (SP 121)
- Audiovisual Nutrition Education Program Review Form (SP 122)
- Bibliography for Guides to Evaluating Nutrition Education Materials (SP 129)

For ordering information, contact:

Extension Distribution Center, 119 Printing/Publications Bldg., Kooser Drive, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-3171. Phone 515-294-5247 Fax: 515-294-2945

## Written Nutrition Education Materials Review Form

### Source Information

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Subject matter \_\_\_\_\_

Type of publication \_\_\_\_\_ Length \_\_\_\_\_

Date of publication \_\_\_\_\_

Author or producer \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Single copy cost \_\_\_\_\_ Bulk copy cost \_\_\_\_\_

Languages available \_\_\_\_\_

Camera-ready copy available: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

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### Review Summary *(to be filled out after the review)*

Name of reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date of review \_\_\_\_\_

Target audience for this material \_\_\_\_\_

Acceptable to my intended target audience and use: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

Purchase recommendation: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

*Attach a copy of the educational material to this form.*

Connie Betterley, M.S., R.D., L.D., EFNEP coordinator, ISU Extension

Brenda Dobson, M.S., R.D., L.D., WIC nutrition services coordinator, Iowa Department of Public Health

Carol Ouverson, communication specialist, ISU Extension

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## A. Reading and Comprehension Level

1. Reading level: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of calculation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Yes	No	NA
<p><b>2. Clear purpose</b></p> <p>Title conveys content of material or attracts reader's attention. The introduction provides clear purpose of the material.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>3. Appropriate word usage</b></p> <p>Words are familiar and appropriate to the target audience. Words are short, usually two syllables or less. New words are clearly defined. Two or fewer technical terms are used, with definitions provided. Vocabulary is consistent.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>4. Appropriate sentence structure</b></p> <p>Sentences are simple, short, specific, and use the active voice. Material is free of grammatical errors.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>5. Appropriate paragraph structure</b></p> <p>Paragraphs are limited to a single message. Main ideas are clear and simply stated. Ideas flow smoothly and logically.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>6. Appropriate overall organization</b></p> <p>Appropriate number of concepts presented for the length of the piece. Priority is given to key information and recommendations. Headings identify different topics or concepts. Headings are simple and located close to text. Key ideas are highlighted, repeated, and summarized. Material is free of typographical errors.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>7. Appropriate tone</b></p> <p>Tone is personal, positive, and respectful. Uses personal pronouns and avoids gender bias.</p>	_____	_____	_____

Comments:

**B. Content**

	Yes	No	NA
<b>1. Accurate, credible information</b>	_____	_____	_____
Information is based on up-to-date and credible research. References and resources are accurate and up-to-date. Material is free of sponsor/product bias. Author or producer of material is a credible source.			
<b>2. Appropriate information</b>	_____	_____	_____
Information presented contributes to appropriate conclusions and actions. Information is appropriate to the age, gender, educational level, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and lifestyle of the target audience. Free of cultural bias and stereotyping.			
<b>3. Useful information</b>	_____	_____	_____
The content addresses target audience needs and concerns. Examples are relevant to lifestyle of target audience. Messages clearly describe desired behavior changes and how to achieve them. General or abstract ideas are reinforced with specific, concrete examples.			
<b>4. Appropriate recipes</b>	_____	_____	_____
Does the recipe:			
• teach a desirable food behavior?	_____	_____	_____
• reinforce important concepts?	_____	_____	_____
• use readily available ingredients?	_____	_____	_____
• use a reasonable number of ingredients?	_____	_____	_____
• use foods acceptable to the target audience?	_____	_____	_____
• use precise and simple measurements?	_____	_____	_____
• give the number of servings and serving size?	_____	_____	_____
• give recommendations for safe food handling and storage?	_____	_____	_____
Is the recipe:			
• compatible with the Dietary Guidelines?	_____	_____	_____
• easy to read?	_____	_____	_____
• easy to follow?	_____	_____	_____
• accurate and tested?	_____	_____	_____
• adaptable to various cooking conditions and equipment?	_____	_____	_____

**Comments:**

**C. Design and Quality**

	Yes	No	NA
<b>1. Quality paper</b>	_____	_____	_____
Printed on paper heavy enough so that print is invisible from one side of the page to the other. Non-gloss or semi-gloss surface.			
<b>2. Appropriate use of color</b>	_____	_____	_____
Color of the ink and paper is used to enhance the appeal of the material or to draw attention to key ideas. Print can be read easily through background tints. Minimal use of reverse type.			
<b>3. Readable type size and style</b>	_____	_____	_____
Uses only one or two simple typefaces. Uses upper and lower case lettering. Bold, italic, or underlining used for emphasis only. Avoids condensed type, all uppercase, ornate, or novelty typefaces. Appropriate leading between lines.			
Minimum of 10 to 12 point size (10 point).			
Minimum of 10 to 12 point size (12 point).			
Explanatory copy on this page is 10 point type with 12 point leading.			
Ten point type with 10 point leading is too tight for good readability.			
Ten point type with 10 point leading is too tight for good readability.			
Ten point type with 10 point leading is too tight for good readability.			
Ten point type with 10 point leading is too tight for good readability.			
<b>4. Appropriate illustrations</b>	_____	_____	_____
Illustrations are simple and realistic. Located next to related ideas in the text. Serve to clarify, explain, or draw attention to main ideas in the text. Provide a reasonable representation of a variety of people and families. Positive role models are depicted.			
<b>5. Appropriate tables, charts, and graphs</b>	_____	_____	_____
Clear and easy to read. Require no further calculation or background information to be understood. Located next to related ideas in the text. Use is appropriate to the target audience.			
<b>6. Organized, balanced layout</b>	_____	_____	_____
Uncluttered layout balances white space, words, and illustrations. Uses ragged right margins to aid readability. Line length is neither too short nor too long for the type size.			

**Comments:**

*Go back to the first page and fill out the review summary.*

# G

## uide to Evaluating Audiovisual Nutrition Education Programs

Audiovisual nutrition programs should be evaluated before using them in educational activities. Evaluation enables you to use limited budget and time wisely, deliver accurate nutrition information, and increase your effectiveness. Using a consistent process for evaluation aids your decision-making. This guide describes a four-step process to help you select the right materials for your nutrition education programs.

### Step one

#### Assess the needs of your target audience

Three questions need to be answered before you begin to evaluate audiovisual programs:

- Who is your target audience?
- What do you want the target audience to learn or be able to do?
- What are the best methods for reaching the target audience?

The more clearly you can answer these three questions, the better you will be able to evaluate and choose the best written materials to achieve your educational goals.

#### *Who is your target audience?*

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Depending upon the nature of your educational activities, you may have only one target audience that is very homogeneous, or you may have multiple target audiences with different demographic characteristics. You may find that you need different audiovisual programs to address the unique needs of each target audience you work with.

#### *What do you want the target audience to learn or be able to do?*

Clear and precise teaching objectives help you determine what you want your target audience to learn from the audiovisual program you present. Information about the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, or skills of the target audience will help you decide at what point in the learning process you want to intervene. For example, you might select different programs depending upon whether your objective is to increase knowledge or develop a skill. Consider the following questions:

- What do audience members already know about a specific nutrition topic? What new information do you want them to learn?
- How do they feel about this topic? Is this an attitude you want to change or enhance?
- What are their current practices or behaviors in relation to this topic? Are these practices you want to change or enhance? Are there specific cultural practices related to this topic?
- What barriers do they have in relationship to the new behavior you want them to adopt?
- What skills do they currently possess? What new skills do you want to build?

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You may already have first-hand knowledge to answer these questions if you work closely with a particular target audience. Advisory boards or other professionals who have close contact with the target audience can provide further information. Research literature can provide insights, but should not be relied upon as the sole source of information. If program budget and time are not constraints, focus groups and in-depth interviews with members of the target audience provide excellent information.

***What are the best methods for reaching the target audience?***

Once you know whom you want to reach and what you want to teach, determine the best methods for achieving your objectives. Find out how the target audience prefers to receive information. Also consider whether you will use the audiovisual program alone or with other educational materials and methods.

## Step two

### **Evaluate the audiovisual nutrition education program**

The *Audiovisual Nutrition Education Materials Review Form* (SP 122) will help you evaluate materials using a consistent process and criteria. The review form is divided into five sections:

- Source information
- Manner of presentation and comprehension level
- Content
- Technical quality
- Review summary

***Source information***

The first page includes descriptive information about the source of the audiovisual program. Gathering and recording this information will help you retrieve these details quickly and easily when you need to order a program or share recommendations with other nutrition educators.

The next three sections of the form are in a checklist format. Check a yes, no, or not applicable for each criterion. Space is provided for comments at the bottom of each section to provide more explanation about your answers.

***Manner of presentation and comprehension level***

Many factors contribute to whether a viewer can comprehend the information presented in an audiovisual program. This section of the form will help you answer the following questions:

- Is the purpose of the program clearly evident?
- Is the language clear and understandable?
- Are the visuals relevant to the target audience?
- Is the pace of the program comfortable?
- Does the presentation flow smoothly and logically and involve the viewer?
- Is the information organized in a manner that contributes to meaning?
- Does the program use a personal, positive, and respectful tone?
- Is the length appropriate?

***Content***

Evaluating the content of an audiovisual program goes beyond whether the information is accurate. This section of the form will help you evaluate the following:

- Is the information credible?
- Is the information appropriate for the target audience?
- Does the information address target audience needs and concerns?
- Is food used appropriately to teach appropriate food behaviors?

Content is the most critical factor when determining whether you will use a particular audiovisual program in your nutrition education program.

**Technical quality** The sound and visual components in audiovisual programs determine whether the program keeps the viewer's attention. These two components must be of good quality and work together to enhance the presentation of nutrition information and contribute to understanding. This section of the form helps you answer these questions:

- Is the sound clear and understandable?
- Are the visuals sharp and focused?
- Do the audio and visual tracks support each other and flow smoothly?

If an instructional guide is provided, the form allows you to document what it includes.

The manner of presentation, content, and technical quality work together to determine the overall quality and effectiveness of an audiovisual program. Accuracy of the content is the overriding factor in making your decision. However, assuming that the content is accurate, consider all of the factors as a whole to determine whether you will purchase a particular program for the target audience and educational objectives you identified in the first step.

**Review summary** The review summary is located on the first page along with the source information for easy reference. However, it is filled in after the review is completed. This section helps you document who conducted the review, the target audience of the audiovisual program, whether the program is acceptable for use, and whether you purchased it.

It is important for you to determine the target audience for the program, and not rely on the producer's suggestion. You may determine during the review process that a program is appropriate for a different target audience than the one suggested. The next step—pretesting the program—will help further determine whether it is appropriate for your target audience.

It is possible that you decide a program is acceptable to the target audience, but choose not to purchase it due to budget or other considerations. The review summary allows you to note this.

It is helpful to organize your review forms. One method is to put the review forms in a notebook, with topic headings that make sense to you. Or file them alphabetically by title or chronologically by the year of production. It is also helpful to attach a copy of the program objectives from the instructional guide. Develop a method that works for you and use it consistently.

## Step three

### **Pretest the program with your target audience**

Pretesting gathers reactions to an audiovisual program from representative members of the target audience. Pretest results help you determine whether you have selected the right program for your target audience and whether it will help you achieve your desired educational objectives. Pretesting answers questions about whether the program is:

- understandable,
- credible,
- appropriate,
- useful,
- attractive,
- attention-getting, and
- acceptable to the target audience.

**Theater testing** is used to test audiovisual programs with a group of people from the target audience. Individuals are recruited to a central location to watch a program and then answer questions about it. This method can be used with small groups or large groups, depending on your access to facilities with adequate equipment. Individuals can also preview a program and provide feedback, but this takes more time.

If funds are not available for extensive pretesting, some pretesting with even five to ten individuals is essential to ensure audiovisual programs are understandable and culturally relevant. If pretesting is not feasible, continuously analyze the feedback from clients when you use an audiovisual program. Is it reaching the audience you intended? Does it help you achieve your teaching objectives? If you answer no to these questions, look for another program that better meets the needs of your target audience.

## Step four

### Use your program effectively

Now that you have carefully selected your audiovisual program, use it effectively in your nutrition education activities. Take the time to preview the program thoroughly. Knowing the content well prepares you for follow-up questions.

Hearing and seeing a videotaped program is often a problem in medium-size and larger groups, especially if a lot of detail is presented. If possible, arrange for at least one 23-inch monitor for every 30 viewers.

Be sure to introduce the program and describe how the information can help the viewers make healthy food choices. Get the viewers involved by asking them to look for specific topics or issues to discuss after the program. For more complex or longer programs, consider dividing the audience into small groups and assigning each group to report back on specific topics or observations. Or show the program in segments, with discussion after each segment.

Continuous loop programs (videotapes with several copies of a program produced back-to-back) quickly become background noise and a source of irritation. Start and stop the videotape each time you use the program.

Most audiovisual programs are not designed to stand alone as learning activities. Make the program content real for viewers through follow-up activities and hands-on experiences. Check the instructional guide for ideas. If you develop your own activities, make them fun yet practical. Use real-life scenarios for practice in decision-making. Ask the audience to identify potential barriers to behavior change, discuss ways to deal with them, and set personal goals for behavior change. When possible, provide written materials supporting the key messages in the program.



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Written by Brenda Dobson MS, RD, LD, WIC nutrition services coordinator, Iowa Department of Public Health, and Connie Betterley, MS, RD, LD, EFNEP coordinator, Iowa State University Extension. Edited by Carol Ouverson, communication specialist, ISU Extension.

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For ordering information, contact:

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## Audiovisual Nutrition Education Program Review Form

### Source Information

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Subject matter \_\_\_\_\_

Format: Videotape \_\_\_\_\_ Slide/tape \_\_\_\_\_ Film \_\_\_\_\_ Filmstrip \_\_\_\_\_

Year produced \_\_\_\_\_ Length \_\_\_\_\_

Producer \_\_\_\_\_

Distributor (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Single copy cost \_\_\_\_\_ Bulk copy cost \_\_\_\_\_

Languages available \_\_\_\_\_

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### Review Summary *(to be filled out after the review)*

Name of reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date of review \_\_\_\_\_

Target audience for this program \_\_\_\_\_

Acceptable to my intended target audience and use: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

Purchase recommendation: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

*Attach a copy of the program objectives from the instructional guide to this form.*

Brenda Dobson, M.S., R.D., L.D., WIC nutrition services coordinator, Iowa Department of Public Health

Connie Betterley, M.S., R.D., L.D., EFNEP coordinator, ISU Extension

Carol Ouverson, communication specialist, ISU Extension

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## A. Manner of Presentation and Comprehension Level

	Yes	No	NA
<p><b>1. Clear purpose</b></p> <p>The intent of the program is clearly evident.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>2. Appropriate language</b></p> <p>Language is familiar and understandable to the target audience. Captions support understanding of material being presented.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>3. Appropriate visuals</b></p> <p>Uses a variety of current images appropriate to the age, gender, educational level, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and lifestyle of the target audience. Free of cultural bias and stereotyping.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>4. Appropriate pacing</b></p> <p>Pace is slow enough to understand yet fast enough to maintain viewer's focus and interest.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>5. Appropriate presentation style</b></p> <p>Program engages viewer early in the presentation. Main ideas are supported by appropriate visuals. Program flows smoothly and logically.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>6. Appropriate overall organization</b></p> <p>Uses effective techniques to aid and contribute to learning. Addresses essential topics and presents enough detail to promote comprehension.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>7. Appropriate tone</b></p> <p>Tone is personal, positive, and respectful. Uses personal pronouns and avoids gender bias.</p>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>8. Appropriate length</b></p> <p>Length is appropriate for setting and context used.</p>	_____	_____	_____

**Comments:**

**B. Content**

	Yes	No	NA
<b>1. Accurate, credible information</b>	_____	_____	_____
Information is based on up-to-date and credible research. Program is free of sponsor/product bias. Producer is a credible source.			
<b>2. Appropriate information</b>	_____	_____	_____
The information presented contributes to appropriate conclusions and actions. Information is appropriate to the age, gender, educational level, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and lifestyle of the target audience. Free of cultural bias and stereotyping.			
<b>3. Useful information</b>	_____	_____	_____
The content addresses target audience needs and concerns. Examples reinforce intended educational objectives and are relevant to lifestyle of target audience.			
<b>4. Appropriate use of food</b>	_____	_____	_____
Does the use of food:			
• teach a behavior consistent with the Dietary Guidelines?	_____	_____	_____
• portray readily available foods?	_____	_____	_____
• include foods acceptable to the target audience?	_____	_____	_____
• portray reasonable serving sizes?	_____	_____	_____
• show safe food handling and storage practices?	_____	_____	_____

**Comments:**

**C. Technical Quality**

	Yes	No	NA
<b>1. Auditory quality</b>	_____	_____	_____
Speaker's voice is clear. Background sounds and music do not interfere with or overpower narrator.			
<b>2. Visual quality</b>	_____	_____	_____
Camera work contributes to effective presentation of information. Visuals are sharp and centered on the screen.			
<b>3. Flow and continuity</b>	_____	_____	_____
Transitions between visuals are smooth and not distracting. The audio and visual tracks work together to present information.			
<b>4. Instructional guide</b>			
An instructional guide is provided.	_____	_____	_____
If yes, does the guide provide:			
• program summary?	_____	_____	_____
• description of the intended audience?	_____	_____	_____
• program objectives?	_____	_____	_____
• background information for the instructor?	_____	_____	_____
• suggestions for integrating program into broader education plan?	_____	_____	_____
• reproducible materials?	_____	_____	_____
• recommended references and resources?	_____	_____	_____

**Comments:**

*Go back to the first page and fill out the review summary.*

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## Bibliography for Guides to Evaluating Nutrition Education Materials

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### BOOKS

#### Assessing Health Education Videos: Guidelines for Health Educators and Trainers

Elizabeth Fabel

Boston, Massachusetts: World Education, 1994

Available for \$5 from World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210-1211 or by calling 617/482-9485

This 16-page guide offers sample review criteria for videos and highlights considerations for audiences with limited literacy or English language skills. Sample assessment forms are included.

#### Clear and Simple: Developing Effective Print Materials for Low-Literate Readers

National Cancer Institute

Bethesda, Maryland: National Cancer Institute, 1994

Available in print from NCI by calling 800/422-6237 or online at [www.nci.nih.gov](http://www.nci.nih.gov) (Select *Information for Patients, Public and the Mass Media*; choose *Public*; look for *Community and Education Resources* and choose *Program Planning Publications*; then select *Free*.)

Easy-to-understand examples demonstrate the use of clear writing principles throughout this book. Chapters address defining the target audience, developing a product concept, developing the content and visuals, and pre-testing and revising the publication.

#### Developing Health Education Materials for Special Audiences: Low-Literate Adults

Jo Ellen Shield and Mary Catherine Mullen

Chicago, Illinois: The American Dietetic Association, 1992

\$34 for ADA members and \$39.95 for non-members

This self-study program includes an audiotape and 56-page study guide that reviews planning, developing, and evaluating health education materials for low-literate adults. The SMOG readability technique for evaluating reading level of materials is described. Guidelines are provided for adapting existing materials to meet clients' needs.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
University Extension

Iowa Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Nutrition and WIC

## **The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition**

William Strunk and E. B. White  
Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 1999

Highly regarded by writers and editors, this 105-page book is a guide to clear, concise prose. It contains rules of grammar phrased as direct orders and provides the principal requirements of plain English style. The emphasis is on fundamentals: the rules of usage and principles of composition most commonly violated.

## **Making Health Communications Work: A Planner's Guide**

National Cancer Institute  
Bethesda, Maryland: National Cancer Institute, April 1989  
Available on-line as described on previous page for **Clear and Simple: Developing Effective Print Materials for Low-Literate Readers**

This guide remains one of the most comprehensive resources about planning, selecting, and developing materials. The chapters about pre-testing print and audiovisual materials provide valuable tips and descriptions of several methods. The guide also addresses implementation and evaluation of programs.

## **The Communicator's Handbook: Tools, Techniques, and Technology**

Patricia Calvert, editor  
Gainesville, Florida: Maupin House, 2000  
Available at [www.maupinhouse.com](http://www.maupinhouse.com) for \$37.95

Written by the Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE), an international association of communications professionals, this book practices what it recommends with a clean layout and conversational tone. Twenty-three chapters address a variety of communications topics such as writing, taking photographs, dealing with the media, holding meetings, and speaking to the public.

## **Writing for Reading: Guide for Developing Print Materials in Nutrition for Low Literacy Adults**

Susan Nitzke, Anne Shaw, Suzanne Pingree, and S. Jane Voichick  
Madison, Wisconsin: Department of Agricultural Journalism, University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1986  
Order from Cooperative Extension Publications, Room 170, 630 West Mifflin St., Madison, Wisconsin, 53703 (Publication B3545, \$1.30). Also available for viewing online at [cf.uwex.edu/ces/pubs/pdf/B3545.PDF](http://cf.uwex.edu/ces/pubs/pdf/B3545.PDF)

Although this is an older publication, the tips remain relevant and useful in developing and targeting written nutrition information for adults with low literacy skills. Topics include assessing the audience, developing materials, designing the format, evaluating readability and comprehension, disseminating materials, and using other resources.

## **Teaching Patients With Low Literacy Skills**

Cecilia C. Doak, Leonard G. Doak, and Jane H. Root  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J.B. Lippincott, 1996

This book provides tools to assess the appropriateness of materials for low literacy audiences to better match literacy skills and health education. Many of the strategies can also be used to improve health communication with other target audiences.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

Betterley, Connie and Dobson, Brenda: **Evaluation tools for nutrition education materials.** *Journal of Nutrition Education* 22: 140B, 1990.

The earlier versions of the evaluation tools are described in this article. Review criteria are briefly discussed and directions are provided for using the tools.

Cloud, Harriet H. and Knight, Melvin E.: **Nutrition education via videotapes.** *Food and Nutrition News* 63 (3), 1991.

This article describes the importance of revising and evaluating videotape programs before purchase or rental. Suggested review criteria include describing the characteristics of the target audience, comparing the facilitator's learning objectives to the content of the videotape, technical quality, cost, and constraints on use.

Mercer, Katherine C.: **An examination of three perspectives on nutrition education materials: The curriculum expert, the dietitian, and the patient.** University of Georgia, 1998.

This dissertation reports the results of surveys of dietitians in the southeastern United States and their review and selection of nutrition education materials. While the dietitians reported that they often review materials before use, they generally did not use a systematic process considering comprehension and technical quality. Fifteen focus groups of patients were also conducted to discuss written materials. Patients stated their desire for simple, concise, focused, and readable materials. The author concluded that dietitians need to place more emphasis on matching instructional design of materials and the content objectives with the needs of clients.

Nitzke, Susan: **Improving the effectiveness of nutrition education materials for low literacy clients.** *Nutrition Today*: 17-23, September/October 1989.

The importance of careful planning, testing, and revising of materials at each step during development is emphasized in this article. Practical suggestions for improving writing for low literacy audiences and examples are presented. Many of the suggestions also improve the effectiveness of materials for other audiences.

Smith, Suzanne B. and Alford, Betty J.: **Literate and semi-literate audiences: Tips for effective teaching.** *Journal of Nutrition Education* 20: 238B, 1988.

This article presents a list of teaching tips for increasing effectiveness. General tips are presented along with specific tips for language, written materials, visuals, and media.

Sullivan, Robert F. and Myers, Dennis C.: **Evaluating video-based training materials.** *Training and Development Journal*: 82-85, June 1987.

This article provides helpful tips for evaluating and documenting review of videotape programs. Rationale supporting each criterion on the sample review checklist provides helpful information.

Tagtow, Angela and Amos, Rosalie: **The extent to which dietitians evaluate nutrition education materials.** *Journal of Nutrition Education*, May/June 2000.

In a survey of 350 Iowa dietitians the authors found that dietitians evaluate materials before use but they do so without using any formal evaluation tools. Barriers to evaluating nutrition education materials are discussed. Recommendations are made for increasing professional development opportunities concerning evaluation processes and how to tailor nutrition communication to meet clients' needs.

## WEB REFERENCES

[www.eicommunications.com](http://www.eicommunications.com)

This site is the home of *The Editorial Eye*, a monthly newsletter for serious writers, editors, and other communication specialists. A sampler of newsletter articles is available with themes ranging from writing techniques to enhance readability, strategies for editing the work of others, effective design and typography choices, and helpful resources. The newsletter itself requires a subscription.

[www.med.utah.edu/pated](http://www.med.utah.edu/pated)

This site for the University of Utah Health Sciences Center presents *Guidelines for Patient Education Written Materials: An Author's Guide*. Access this document by selecting *Patient Education*, then selecting *An Author's Guide*. The guide provides tips about citing references and clear writing style. Directions for using two readability formulas are included along with a survey form for pre-testing materials with clients and a checklist for evaluating materials.

[www.orst.edu](http://www.orst.edu)

This site for Oregon State University Extension Home Economics discusses working with low income audiences and culturally diverse audiences and how to develop readable materials. Several short self-study modules (about 15 minutes each) are available to help you learn techniques for developing readable materials.

[www.PlainLanguage.com](http://www.PlainLanguage.com)

This site offers excellent and practical tips for writers interested in effective and efficient communication. Using plain language is a process that requires planning, identifying reader needs, organizing ideas, writing clearly, and testing documents for usability and comprehension. The site also offers *Plain Train, the Plain Language Online Training Program*. This program is full of practical ideas and generates a checklist after all eight sections are completed.

[www.prenataled.com](http://www.prenataled.com)

This site is an electronic handbook of information about developing and evaluating health-related content and materials. The site is sponsored by *Beginnings: A Practical Guide Through Pregnancy*, a free monthly newsletter for prenatal care providers and managed care professionals in health education. The newsletter issues offer excellent examples of how to apply the tips for better writing. The site also includes an article on the origins and purposes of nine computerized and hand-calculated readability formulas and how to make readability testing meaningful.

Written by:

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This bibliography accompanies the following four publications:

- Guide to Evaluating Written Nutrition Education Materials, SP 119
- Written Nutrition Education Materials Review Form, SP 120
- Guide to Evaluating Audiovisual Nutrition Education Programs, SP 121
- Audiovisual Nutrition Education Program Review Form, SP 122

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