Writing seminar cuts communication clutter Contact: admin@[tifpi.org/](https://tifpi.wildapricot.org/)

The Institute for Performance Improve (TIfPI) announced today that, in September, it would introduce a 5-part online writing seminar that cuts communications clutter. Each day businesspeople squander countless hours producing memos, reports, and emails that go unread by their readers. To counter this trend, TIfPI will offer “Professional’s Plain Language Business Writing.” Sessions will begin on Tuesday, September 10, 2013 and held weekly through Tuseday, October 10, 2013. TIfPI will award a certificate for those successfully completing the series.

The series was created by Jane Ranshaw, who also leads each session. In addition to the group sessions, participants will receive weekly one-on-one coaching and review of homework assignments. Ranshaw has been an independent writing consultant in the Chicago area for 35 years and has delivered writing seminars for more than 20.

Benefits of this series include:

* Save time in needless rewrites and endless email exchanges
* Convey confidence in your writing—and in your ideas
* Improve relationships with clear, concise messages
* Meet standards set by the Plain Language Act of 2010

Overview

* A report the participant has written previously
* Five weekly 90-minute live on-line sessions
* One to two hours of homework weekly, including assignments submitted to the course leader
* Professional review of writing exercises
* In-class exercises
* Optional one-on-one 30-minute coaching sessions each week
* Extensive handouts including Ranshaw’s award-winning ***Consultant's Quick Guide to Grammar and Style***.

Details

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|  | Topics | In-class | Homework |
| Session 1: Getting Started | * Define your purpose * Know your audience * Get started and organize | Respond to questions/poll. | Prepare and submit a first draft of an executive summary for a report prepared previously at work.  Read handout materials for Session 2. |
| Session 2: Conciseness | * Use simple words * Eliminate unnecessary words * Avoid jargon * Unmask verbs * Use active voice | Complete exercises in the handout and volunteer answers. | Revise and submit first draft of executive summary.  Read handout materials for Session 3 |
| Session 3: Clarity | * Prefer clear, direct sentences * Use transitions to help readers connect ideas * Be personal and positive * Be specific * Choose the correct word | Complete exercises in the handout and volunteer answers. | Complete grammar errors using Ranshaw’s ***Consultant's Quick Guide.***  Read handout materials for Session 4. |
| Session 4: Emphasis | * Vary sentence length * Vary sentence structure * Emphasize “need to know” * Use formatting and design principles. | Review grammar exercise; volunteer answers.  Complete exercises in the handout and volunteer answers. | Prepare and submit a brief problem/solution report based on criteria presented in class, including an executive summary.  Read handout materials for Session 5. |
| Session 5: Report Writing | * Differentiate among   + Features & benefits;   + Risks & assumptions, and   + Findings, conclusions, and recommendations. * Identify structure of formal reports. | Review reports and comment on other participants’ reports.  Complete exercises in the handout and volunteer answers. | Participants have a final one-one-one coaching session with the instructor. |

Plain language is clear, concise writing intended to be easily understood by those reading it. President Obama signed the Plain Writing Act of 2010, requiring agencies to write in plain language. The goal is to produce materials aimed at 21st century readers who tend to scan documents and lack time to translate wordy, difficult writing. Similar standards are found in most countries whose first language is English.

In 2012 Deb Page of Willing Learner, Inc. and Dr. Judith Hale, PhD. of Hale Associates partnered to launch The Institute for Performance Improvement (TIfPI, [www.tifpi.org](http://www.tifpi.org/)) to provide a highly relevant type of professional home for performance improvement practitioners focused on P-20 education and workforce performance improvement. The Institute engages Communities of Practice working on ideas, projects and changes related to education and workforce improvement and capacity building. They provide key credentials for professionals in the performance improvement field.

Jane Ranshaw conducts workshops and webinars on business cases and proposals, business writing, and internal consulting. She also presents communication seminars for the American Management Association.

Ms. Ranshaw completed her MBA at The University of Chicago and her BS degree in Business at Indiana University. She is the author of “Consultant’s Quick Guide to Grammar and Style,” and “Managing Relationships in the Performance Improvement Process” in the 2010 Handbook of Improving Performance in the Workplace: Volume I by Pfeiffer.

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