



## **YOU'RE WELCOME!**

### **A Guide for Planning Union Conferences in Clear Language**



Canadian Labour Congress  
Congrès du travail du Canada

*Publit en franqais sous le titre, Bienvenue !Guide de planification de confirences syndicales en langage clair.*

Publication of this guide was made possible with funding from the National Office of Literacy and Learning, Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

**Other resources in the *Learning in Solidarity* series of the Canadian labour Congress:**

- *Making It Clear: Clear Language for Union Communications*, © 1999
- *Bargaining Basic Skills: What Unions Should Know about Negotiating 2000 Worker-Centred Literacy Programs*, © 2000
- *Learning for Our Lives: A Union Guide to Worker-Centred Literacy*, © 2000
- *Seeds for Change: A Curriculum Guide for Worker-Centred Literacy*, © 2001
- *Making It Clear: A Clear Language and Design Screen* © 2006

Published by the  
Canadian Labour Congress  
2841 Riverside Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1V 8X7  
[www.canadianlabour.ca](http://www.canadianlabour.ca)

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Printed in Canada

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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We've all been at events where we've felt confused or left out when we don't understand what's going on. Sometimes, this happens because of the way people talk or how information is presented. Over the last few years, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), unions, federations of labour and labour councils have taken steps to integrate a literacy and clear language approach into our communications, our courses and our conferences. Together with our commitment to diversity, it is part of the effort to make our labour principles of social justice, equality and inclusion a reality across the work of the union.

We worked hard to make the 2006 CLC National Education Conference and Literacy Forum models for accessible and inclusive language. We learned a lot along the way, and still have much to learn. But we thought our experience organizing these events might be useful to others who want to try this approach when planning workshops and conferences. To that end, we have developed *You're Welcome: A Guide for Planning Union Conferences in Clear Language*.

We would like to thank the people who helped create this handbook. The guide was written and designed by labour education consultants Bev Burke and Lynette Plett with illustrations by Debbie Thompson Wilson and graphic design by Irene Boucher. Thanks to CLC Education staff Cindy Wiggins, Lynn Carlile and Elaine Dumais and to CLC translator Louise Vaillancourt and CLC Anti-racism Director Karl Flecker. Thanks also to Manon Parrot, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Marina Schmitt, Public Service Alliance of Canada, Bob Hatfield and Gisele Pageau, communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, and Jean Connon Unda for their contributions. We thank the National Office of Literacy and Learning, Human Resources and Social Development Canada for their financial support.

Producing a guide like this requires a skilled and effective coordinator. Special thanks to Tamara Levine, CLC Literacy Coordinator, for her commitment and tenacity in coordinating this project. She is our 'heart and soul' for clear language and literacy issues and is militant about encouraging our movement to strive to be more inclusive by expanding our work in this area.

We look forward to working with you as we strive to build a more just and inclusive labour movement and society.

In Solidarity,



Barbara Byers  
Executive Vice-President  
Canadian Labour Congress



## Foreword

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## **Part: I**

# **Introduction**



## Clear language: Part of labour's strategy for inclusion and equality

### 1. Why this guide?

This guide is for staff and activists in the labour movement who are involved in organizing conferences or other large events for their members.

#### It is about:

- Describing how clear language can help make conferences more inclusive.
- Sharing some concrete tools for planning a clear language conference.
- Offering a model for developing guidelines for 'thinking equality' when we plan labour events.



#### Where it came from

Since 1996, the Literacy Project of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) has supported its affiliates in raising awareness of literacy issues and in developing workplace literacy programs. At the same time, the CLC encouraged the use of clear language communications. It has developed resources and offered courses on clear language to unions, federations of labour and labour councils.

Literacy and clear language are two sides of the same coin, as they are both ways to encourage greater participation and strengthen the union movement. Literacy programs help members build their skills, get better jobs, improve family life and participate more actively in their communities and in their union. Clear language helps the union communicate more effectively with its members.

Here are two examples:

- 1) Following the 2002 Convention which mandated the CLC to rewrite its constitution in clear language, a clear language constitution was adopted in 2005.
- 2) The CLC planned its 2006 National Education Conference and Literacy Forum using a clear language lens.



We tested many of the ideas in this guide at the 2006 CLC National Education Conference and Literacy Forum. We then revised them based on feedback from participants, facilitators, staff and members of the CLC Literacy Working Group.

## **2. Clear language as a tool for building an inclusive conference**

### **What is Clear Language?**

Clear language is language your intended audience can easily understand. We will explore and expand this definition as we think about the role of clear language in building more inclusive conferences and other events.

### **Clear language is about power**

- Language is a tool. It can be used to include or exclude others.
- Clear language is about hearing ALL our members' voices .
- Clear language is about refusing to use language that silences and excludes people, as when a lawyer talks in 'legalese'.
- It is about listening carefully and valuing all contributions, without judging them based on grammar, accent, style or fluency of speech.
- It is about taking time to listen to those who may take longer to express themselves because of language differences or different speaking styles.



### **Clear language is about access and inclusion**

- It means making sure that our message is well-understood by everyone.
- It is about taking the experience and needs of our diverse membership into account when we design our conference program and materials:
  - members from all cultures, languages, racial and ethnic backgrounds
  - women and men
  - members with physical or mental disabilities
  - members of all age groups
  - members of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

### **Clear language is about cultural context**

- It is about taking translation seriously and assuring accessibility in all the languages of the conference.
- It is also about recognizing that we make assumptions about what people know and understand based on our own cultural context. For example, if our materials refer to a television program from the 1960s, we assume participants grew up and went to school in Canada in the 1960s and that they are familiar with the TV program. We exclude youth and those born and raised in other countries.

### **Clear language needs to be part of a larger strategy**

- Using clear and inclusive language is an important aspect of promoting equality.
- An awareness of how language can reinforce the power to control and exclude people is an important part of understanding power dynamics in society.
- Clear language can't change power relations on its own. It needs to be part of a larger strategy for access, inclusion and equality.

### **Towards an inclusive conference**

Clear language is one of many steps we need to take to make conferences more inclusive. In this guide, we provide guidelines and examples (in Section two) and resources (in Section Three). We hope they will help make your next conference or other event more effective in reaching your goals.







## Part II: Guidelines and Examples



## Publicity and Communications

Once your organization has decided to hold a conference, you will need a committee to help plan it. It's important that the committee reflect your members by including representatives from diverse groups. One of the first things your committee will have to consider is who the intended audience is for the conference.

### Your Audience

Think about the purpose of your conference and about who needs to be encouraged to attend. Hopefully, you will want to reach out to new people who may not be among "the usual suspects" who generally attend union conferences.

Think about how to publicize the conference in new ways to as wide an audience as possible. In your communications, encourage union leaders and decision-makers to sponsor a mix of participants that includes members of equality-seeking groups. See the example "Working Towards Inclusion" on page 11.

Thinking about your intended audience will help the people who write and design the publicity material for the conference. Your audience will be better able to understand your message if the material is written and designed clearly.

### Your Conference Information Package

**The conference information package will include:**

- Text-based information
- Forms to fill out and return
- Design (lay-out, graphics, logos, etc.)

**It should include information about:**

- Location and dates
- Cost
- Conference agenda (see the example "Agenda" on page 9).
- Travel and accommodation
- How to get more information

**The registration package will usually include the following forms:**

- Registration
- Childcare
- Special needs
- Self-identification questionnaire.



**Here are some other documents you may want to include:**

- A Conference Invitation Letter. See the example "Conference Invitation" on page 8.
- A one page visual outline of the conference and workshop(s). See the example, "Conference Workshop at a Glance" on page 10.
- A conference poster.

## Getting the message out

- Thinking about how to get the word out about your conference and into the hands of your intended audience will help you come up with an effective distribution strategy.
- Thinking about who will receive your conference information package, how well they read, and under what conditions they will read it will help you write and design distribute your materials. For example, if the material will be posted on a union bulletin board in the workplace, you will want to make sure there is an attractive poster that gets the message out with a limited number of words.

**You will probably want to distribute the information in various ways:**

- Mail 
- Website 
- Telephone 
- Email

Remember that the conference package probably won't reach all potential participants directly. It may be passed on by someone else or distributed at a union meeting, for example.

## Writing and designing for inclusion

- Encourage the participation of members from equality-seeking groups in your conference publicity materials. This will signal that you are interested in a diverse audience.
- Show a variety of people (in terms of gender, race, ability, age, etc.) in your publicity materials and visuals.
- Refer to the next section, General Guidelines for Writing and Design.

## Check it out

- Before you finalize your publicity materials, give them to several readers for feedback.
- Make sure the readers represent your intended audience and include members of diverse cultural groups.



## Conference Invitation

### Labour Education: *Building the Movement*



### **Conference Invitation** **A Labour Education Conference and Literacy Forum**

- When:* Thursday, November 30th to Sunday, December 3rd, 2006
- Where:* Crowne Plaza and Ottawa Marriott
- Who:* Activists, member facilitators, committee reps, union staff and leaders who want to advance the role of labour education in their organization.
- Why:* To build a labour movement where more union members engage in the struggle for social justice, equality and workers' rights in our workplaces, communities and legislatures.
- What:* Following the opening Literacy Forum, all delegates will participate in a workshop to explore how to use labour education to:
- enhance the day-to-day work of the union
  - build inclusive unions within an inclusive labour movement
  - expand the labour movement
  - build political power

*Send in the attached registration form with a cheque for \$250 by Friday, November 3rd, 2006.*



**Canadian Labour Congress**  
**Congrès du travail du Canada**



## Conference Programme

Labour Education Conference  
and Literacy Forum



**Thursday, November 30th to Sunday, December 3rd, 2006**

## Agenda

### Thursday, November 30<sup>th</sup>

- 12:45 PM - 4:30 PM            Literacy Forum
- 4:45 PM - 5:30 PM            Conference Orientation:  
If this is your first time at a CLC Labour Education Conference, we would like to welcome you to this orientation session.
- 7:00 PM                          Conference Opening Plenary

### Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>

- 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM            All-day workshop
- Free evening for networking

### Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>

- 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM            All-day workshop
- 7:30 PM                          Evening Cabaret

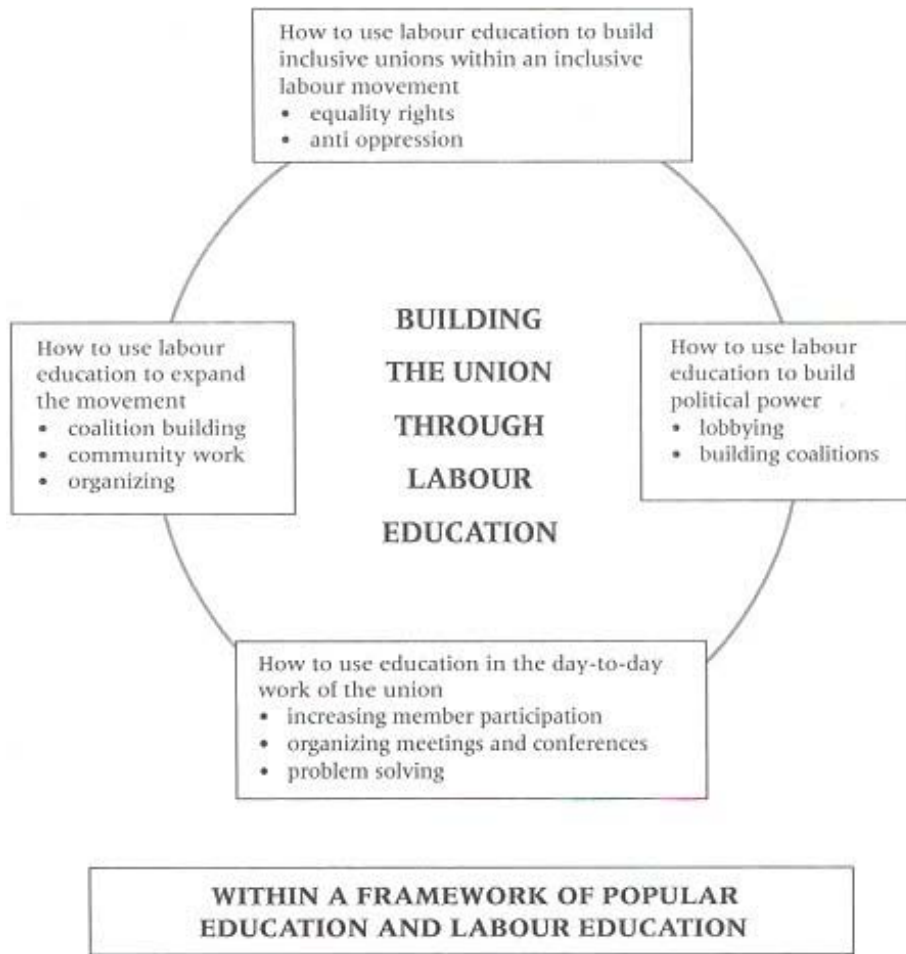
### Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>

- 9:00 AM - 12:00 NOON        Final Plenary



**Conference Workshop at a Glance**

**THE CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE**



## **Working Towards Inclusion**

### **Literacy is about inclusion!**

#### **A labour commitment**

We've all been at events where we've felt confused or left out if we don't understand what's going on. Sometimes, this happens because of the way people talk or how information is presented. Over the last few years, the CLC, unions and federations of labour have taken steps to integrate a literacy and clear language approach into our communications, our courses and our conferences. Together with our commitment to diversity, it is part of the effort to make our labour principles of social justice, equality and inclusion a reality across the work of the union.

#### **Toward a model conference**

We are working towards making *Literacy and Labour Education: Building the Movement* a model conference for accessible and inclusive language. We hope that you will join us in our efforts to build this approach into all aspects of the conference, at the Literacy Forum, in our workshop and plenary sessions and in our materials. Our plan is to document this innovative process and to produce a suggested set of guidelines for use by unions.

#### **The Literacy Forum**

The opening Literacy Forum will introduce conference delegates to what a union approach in literacy and clear language is all about. We will:

- hear how unions are creating new learning opportunities for their members through literacy and workplace education.
- share stories and examples of how literacy and clear language have helped unions reach out to members who are not yet active.
- learn how literacy and clear language have helped unions plan, organize and communicate in new ways.
- find out how to bring literacy and clear language to your union!



## Writing and Design

### Some writing tips

#### Content

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Will it be clear to the readers how the content relates to them?
- Will members from diverse cultures understand and relate to what you are saying?
- Are you reflecting the experience of both men and women?
- Will it be relevant to participants of different age groups?
- Are you including the experience of members with physical and mental disabilities?
- Is it inclusive of members' sexual orientation and gender identity?

**Ensure that members from diverse cultures will understand what you are trying to say by checking it out with them in advance.**





## **Organization**

- Tell the reader how the material is organized. For example, use a table of contents, clear headings and subheadings to guide the reader.
- Put the most important ideas near the beginning.
- Summarize important information.
- For lists, use bullets or numbers instead of burying them in the text.

## **Words and sentences**

- Write in the active voice wherever possible. For example, avoid: "*A conference is being planned by the CLC Education Committee*". Instead write: "The CLC Education Committee is planning a conference".
- Avoid acronyms, jargon and difficult words. If you use acronyms, make sure to give the full name followed by the acronym in brackets the first time you use it. *Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)*. If you have to use technical terms, For example, make sure to explain them.
- Use verbs instead of nouns where possible. For example, say "*The delegate registered for the conference.*" rather than "*The delegate sent her registration for the conference.*"
- Avoid words that reinforce stereotypes or demean members.
- Eliminate extra words.



## Some layout and design tips

- Choose an appropriate font size. Use at least a 13 point font. (as in this sentence.)
- Use a serif type style with the little hooks on each letter for the text body. For example, **Palatino** and **Garamond** are serif fonts. It is easier to read than sans serif type styles where the lines of each letter are straight up and down. Use sans serif fonts like **Arial** and **Verdana** for titles and headings.
- Use lower case text except for titles and headings.
- Make sure paragraphs are justified (in a straight line) on the left and ragged on the right.
- Highlight key text. Use headings and sub-headings, bold, bullets, colour, boxes. Make sure not to use too many highlighting techniques on the same page.
- Avoid coloured print and neon or dark backgrounds. These make reading difficult.
  - Limit using type over a background image. Be sure your text is easy to read.
  - Ensure that photographs or other graphic images complement the text and reflect the diversity of your members.
  - Provide a large print version or taped version of print materials for participants with visual disabilities.



## Preparing Participant Materials

**Before you begin, ask these questions:**

- Who are the participants? What is their reading level?
- How will participants use these materials?
- What do participants already know about the topic? What don't they know?
- What do we want the participants to do, feel and know as a result of this conference?
- How will the conference and workshop materials reflect the range of experience of all participants? How will they address differences in race, culture, ethnic background, sexuality, gender, age, ability /disability etc.?



## Tips for writing and adapting materials

- Look at potential materials for their readability. The CLC clear language binder and screen, *Making it clear: Clear language for union communications* are useful tools for this.
- Limit the volume and density of materials or you will overwhelm people.
- Use visuals wherever possible to illustrate points.
- Put text into easy-to-read lists, charts, tables, etc.
- Refer to the previous section *Writing and Design* for more tips.



## Dealing with difficult vocabulary

- Don't assume that participants know difficult words, jargon, and union technical terms. Below are some ways to help participants understand difficult and unfamiliar language:
- Provide a clear language glossary of the terms used.
- Define technical terms and include examples.
- Write out words and names in full the first time you use them and explain their meaning.

## Starting with the participant

Start from the experience of participants. This helps to unpack difficult vocabulary and concepts. Think about:

- What experiences have participants had that are relevant to the topic?
- How does the topic relate to participants' real-life situations, their problems, their aspirations?
- What questions do participants bring with them to this shared exploration of the topic?
- How will participants use their new knowledge and skills from the conference?

## Layout and design tips

- Number the pages.
- Use dividers for different sessions or topics.
- Code categories of materials by using a combination of colours and symbols. For example, use different pastel-coloured paper for:
  - activity sheets
  - information sheets
  - visuals
- Refer to the *General Writing and Design* in the previous section for more tips.



## Writing Facilitator Notes

Assume that the facilitators are new to the material and that everything must be explained in detail. Hold a facilitator training session wherever possible. At the facilitator training session make sure to talk about the importance of clear language.

### Content

Your workshop notes should include:

#### 1. An introduction for the facilitators to:

- Explain how the workshop fits within the overall conference
- Review their role
- Provide background materials on the workshop theme
- Introduce the materials. Stress in the notes that facilitators should feel free to modify the program to meet the needs of the participants while meeting the objectives of the course.

#### 2. An overview of the workshop, 'workshop at a glance', including:

- Goals
- Times
- Agenda
- Materials and supplies needed for the workshop
- Advance preparation required (flipcharts and other visuals etc.)



**3. An overview of each session or module in an longer workshop.**

For example, a two-day conference might have four workshop sessions. Each session might begin with a one sheet 'session at a glance' overview that includes:

- Goals
- Total times
- Agenda (with numbered activities and time required for each one)
- Materials and supplies needed
- Advance preparation required.

This helps the facilitators work their way through the material and keep focused during the workshop.

**4. Detailed facilitator notes for each session to include:**

- Title of each activity and total time it takes
- Goal of the activity
- Key steps in the activity (bulleted)
- Examples of answers participants might give to questions posed
- Suggestions for prompts if the desired points are not forthcoming
- Background notes to the facilitator to elaborate key points
- Reminders to the facilitator of key points to help participants understand the material. For example:
  - Suggest that each small group task be read aloud as well as posted
  - When there is a diagram or graphic, the facilitator should be instructed to 'build the diagram' rather than begin with the finished product.

**5. A copy of the participant materials including handouts.**

See the example at the end of this section for a sample workshop overview and detailed facilitator notes.



## Writing and Formatting

Write and design the notes so that they will be easy for the facilitator to use. Below are some suggestions:

- Keep sentences short. Introduce only one idea in each sentence
- Use at least 13 point type
- Use sub-headings for longer activities
- Leave space between bulleted points
- Use dividers for different sessions or modules
- Put the facilitator notes in an easy-to-read pastel colour not used in the participant materials
- In preparing the facilitator notes, double-check that the references to participant materials are consistent throughout and correspond to what participants received (coloured sheet, page number, etc.).

## Test your notes

Ask several potential facilitators who did not work on the design to read the notes for clarity of information and organization and to provide feedback.



## Sample Facilitator Notes for a Conference Workshop on Strengthening Women's Leadership

### Workshop at a Glance

#### Goals

1. Identify what we mean by 'good leadership'.
2. Identify barriers to women getting elected to leadership positions in the union.
3. Discuss strategies and practise skills to address the barriers.
4. Make recommendations for strengthening women's leadership in the union.

**Time** 4.5 hours

#### Agenda

9:00-9:15

9:15-9:45

9:45-10:15

1. Introductions
2. What makes a good leader
3. Barriers to women gaining leadership

#### **10:15-10:30 BREAK**

10:30-11:00

4. Strategies for advancing women's leadership

11:00-12:00

5. Practice developing an election flyer or a campaign speech

#### **12:00-1:30 LUNCH**

1:30-1:40

6. Getting started

1:40-2:20

7. Recommendations for strengthening women's leadership

2:20-2:30

8. Personal action to advance equality

2:30-2:55

9. Pick the Moment

2:55-3:00

10. Closing exercise

#### **3:00 BREAK and move to plenary.**

#### Materials

- All of the Participant Materials. In these detailed facilitator notes, these are referred to by number: P1, P2 etc.
- Large drawing of a woman leadership figure
- Your drawing of "The road to getting elected"

#### Supplies

- 1 pack of large sticky notes
- Lots of felt pen marker pens in different colours
- Masking tape
- Flipchart stand and paper
- 20 sheets of gold (or other colour) paper

#### Preparation

- Make large drawing of Woman Figure, using the sample drawing in the facilitator notes. Feel free to improvise.
- Cut in half and tape together pieces of flip chart paper to make a winding 'path' across the wall called "the road to getting women elected". Use the sample drawing in the facilitator notes and your creativity!
- Cut about 20 paper boulders from half sheets of coloured paper.

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## Detailed Facilitator Notes

### 1. Introductions (9:00-9:15)

#### GOALS

- To introduce each other and the workshop,
- To break the ice

#### Name Game (5minutes)

- Welcome people. Say that we introduced each other yesterday - today we are going to do a quick exercise to see how many names we remember.
- Each table has 30 seconds to look at the people sitting at the table on their RIGHT (make sure each table knows which table they will be introducing). In the 30 seconds, the table prepares to introduce each member at the assigned table (name, where they're from).
- As each person is introduced, they are asked to stand up. Applause after each table introduces their partner table.

#### Participant expectations and the workshop plan (10minutes)

- Do a round and ask each person to say briefly why they chose this workshop.
- Review the goals and agenda for the workshop. You can either put these up on flipchart or review The workshop at a glance (PI). Note any expectations from participants that will NOT be met - and where others might be met in the program. Say that yesterday we looked at how important the union is for women. In this workshop we will explore ways to strengthen and promote women's leadership in a way that builds the union.
- Remind people of the group contract from yesterday posted on the wall.

### 2. What's a good leader? (9:15-9:35)

#### GOAL

- Identify what makes a good leader

#### The story of Viola Desmond (5minutes)

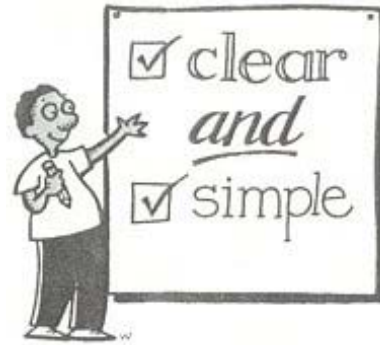
- Explain that this is a story based on a true event in Canadian history. From this story we learn about taking leadership in the fight for justice.
- Review the goals and agenda for the workshop. You can either put these up on flipchart or review The workshop at a glance (PI). Note any expectations from participants that will NOT be met - and where others might be met in the program. Say that yesterday we looked at how important the union is for women. In this workshop we will explore ways to strengthen and promote women's leadership in a way that builds the union.
- Ask people to do the actions called for in the story as you read it. They can stay seated in their chairs. Warn people that they will have to listen carefully.
- Read the Viola Desmond story (P2) aloud. Participants do the actions as you read.
- Ask for a show of hands for how many people had heard of Viola before. Say that we often don't hear about our women leaders. And many people do not know about many of our struggles, in this case against racism in Canada. Racial segregation is more often recognised as something that happened in the U.S. Most will know of Rosa Parks who took similar heroic action 9 years later.
- Ask: What were the leadership qualities you admire in Viola? (people might mention courage, commitment, willing to stand up for what she believed in... ) Write these on stickies and post them on the large woman figure that you have posted on the wall.



## Facilitating

### Advance preparation

- Find out as much as possible about your participants. At a conference this advance information may be limited.
- Note that participants will have indicated the need for an accommodation on the special needs form. Where the accommodation requires facilitators to take this into account, they will need to be informed. For example, a participant with a hearing disability may require the facilitator to speak facing the class.
- Anticipate that some participants might have reading, writing or comprehension difficulties and consider how you will help them participate fully in the workshop. There are a few examples under 'On your feet' on the next page.
- Anticipate cultural differences among participants which may involve, for example, different accents and ways of describing experiences. Consider how to share the richness of the diversity of experience and how to address power imbalances in the class.



## On your feet

- Set ground rules with participants for equal participation and respect in the workshop. During the discussion of ground rules, invite participants to raise a special need. For example, a participant who has a hearing impairment may ask the facilitator not to talk while facing the flipchart.
- Remind participants of the anti-harassment policy and flipchart the names of conference ombudsmen.
- Use language that is as clear as possible. Check that all participants from diverse cultural backgrounds understand what is being said. Make sure that participants with accents are listened to with attention and respect. Encourage people to interject if they don't understand a term, instruction, etc.
- Interject and ask your co-facilitator or a participant to explain an acronym or a difficult word they have used. This models that these kinds of questions are encouraged.
- Read the task out loud as well as posting it on the flipchart or passing it around as a handout. Ask for questions or give examples of what's meant by terms or words that might be unclear. For example, if the task is to 'analyze factors which help organizing ...', give an example of a possible 'factor'.
- Provide an option in some exercises to report back using a word or picture.
- Ask if everyone understands a task or the points in a presentation. Wait for feedback before moving on.
- If material needs to be read aloud in the group, ask for volunteers to read rather than go around the room. This way, a participant who reads with difficulty isn't put on the spot.
- Break into pairs or triads if quieter people are not getting a chance to talk or if people seem to have difficulty reading.
- Explain that there are no prizes for correct spelling and grammar on flipcharts in your workshop. If you are not sure how to spell a word yourself, sharing that difficulty with the class makes participants feel more comfortable.



## Communicating with your co-facilitator

In most labour conferences, workshops have co-facilitators. Below are a few suggestions for working successfully together.

- Prepare together before the conference begins
- Discuss in advance:
  - Cues for when you get into trouble, blank out etc.
  - How you will deal with disagreements between you
  - How to deal with sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia or other issues as they arise, taking into account your own identities
  - Who will take 'major' and 'minor' responsibility for particular parts of the workshop
- Know your own material and your partner's material as well
- Reassure and support each other during the conference
- Check in frequently with each other on how things are going and make the necessary adjustments.



## Selecting and Briefing Speakers

### Who are we looking for?

#### Consider speakers who:

- Have a strong track record. (Get feedback from someone who has heard them speak and who can vouch that they are effective and respectful communicators.)
- Have experience talking to workers
- Reflect the membership (in gender, race, age, etc.)
- Are open to learning about clear language principles or at least to understanding why they are important.

### How do we brief them on clear language?

- Explain to the speaker that your union has a policy to encourage the use of clear, accessible language in all of its events. Explain that your role is to help provide background information and support.
- Prepare and provide the speaker with a short hand-out on clear language presentations well in advance of the conference. Review the key points with the speaker. (See sample handout at the end of this section.)
- Provide speakers with a composite portrait of who the participants will be and what they might know or not know about the topic.
- Discuss with the speaker the familiarity with vocabulary, concepts, knowledge etc. that you expect participants to have about the topic.
- Review key points that you want the speaker to make in the presentation which will connect with the experience of participants and the goals of the conference.
- Review the time available for the presentation, and how you will indicate when their time is up. Leave time for feedback and questions after each presentation.



## Thinking outside the box: alternatives to speakers and panels

- To introduce the conference theme, consider using a cultural presentation (theatre, musical group). Think about the impact of your choices on a diverse audience. Make sure that the presentations reflect cultural diversity.
- To present information or analysis, consider using a mix of methods to engage the audience. There are many different ways to get audience participation, even in a large plenary setting.

### Examples from the CLC

**At the opening plenary of CLC National Education Conference in November 2006, three labour educators engaged more than 250 participants in an interactive, bilingual conversation about popular education. The session included:**

- **small group discussions by participants**
- **theatre**
- **role playing**
- **overheads and other visual aids.**

**At the CLC Literacy Forum, members of the CLC Literacy Working Group performed short skits to illustrate the impact of using unclear language in various union activities.**

**The 200 participants analysed and discussed the skits in small groups. A roving reporter invited participants to share their observations.**

**Participants evaluated the sessions as interesting, informative and accessible.**



### **Clear Language Guidelines for Speakers and Presenters**

1. Use language and terminology that is familiar to all the participants:
  - Explain any acronyms
  - Limit the use of difficult or unfamiliar words
  - Use examples to illustrate concepts
  - Consider and respect differences in the cultural backgrounds of participants.
2. Find ways to build in audience feedback and participation. For example:
  - Ask the audience to indicate their experience with the topic through having people stand up, wave hands etc.
  - Include opportunities (and sufficient time) for feedback and questions .
  - Create an opportunity for dialogue within the body of the presentation.
3. Use visuals selectively to help illustrate points. To be most effective, ensure that:
  - the visuals reflect the diversity of the audience
  - the visuals are clear and easy to understand
  - the equipment works - (try it out in advance)
  - everyone will be able to see and hear.
4. Speak clearly and not too fast, especially where there is simultaneous translation.



## **Guidelines for Simultaneous Interpretation in Clear Language**

An interpreter sits in a sound-proof booth, listens to the speaker through head-phones, then interprets the message into a microphone in a second language. At most conferences, there are two or three people who take turns actively interpreting. Participants listen to the interpretation on headphones.

### **For organizers**

- Provide the interpreters, including sign language interpreters, with enough copies of speeches, visual aids, handouts and other materials in both languages.
- Have copies of all materials available ahead of time.
- Use interpreters who know the organization and its jargon, if possible. Provide a glossary of terms and acronyms in both languages.
- Know the language distribution of participants. For example, if there are a lot of French speakers, have more anglophone interpreters since it is easier to translate into your first language.
- Sign language interpretation works differently and particular needs should be discussed in advance with the sign interpreters.





## **For presenters and workshop facilitators**

- Have visual aids, handouts, etc. available in both languages.
- Get materials to the organizers ahead of time so they can be made available to the interpreters.
- Orient participants to what is involved in being part of a interpreted workshop; point out the following:
  - Interpretation installations have several channels: announce channel numbers for reception in each language.
  - Hitting or moving the microphones hurts the interpreters' ears.
  - The microphone should not touch the body and it should be pinned to clothing so that it doesn't move.
  - Speakers should turn their microphone on when they start to speak and switch it off when they stop.
  - Only one person should speak at once.
  - There should be no cross-talk as interpreters can't hear and people will lose sense of what has been said.
- Do not move too frequently from one language to another so that participants do not have to take earphones out too often and interpreters don't have to switch.
- Give clues when you are going to switch languages. For example, say the first word, phrase or sentence in the new language, pausing to give both interpreters and participants time to adjust. Then repeat what you have just said before continuing in the new language.
- If you are reading, make sure that interpreters have a copy of the text (in both languages if available). Read slowly.
- Pause after every few sentences so the interpreters can catch up.
- Avoid acronyms and difficult words.
- Use visual aids (pictures, diagrams, key words). Do not rely wholly on the spoken word. You can have visual materials available in both languages concurrently. For example:
  - Use two flipcharts with two people taking notes, one in each language.
  - PowerPoint slides with two screens running at the same time, one in each language.



## **Translation of Materials in Clear Language**

### **Planning bilingual conferences**

Translation should not be an afterthought, but part of the conference preparation from the outset. For example, the theme or title of the conference should be developed in English and French. If the conference is to be in two languages, the preparation should be done in both languages. In all plenaries, maintain an appropriate language balance. For example, no plenary should have presenters in one language only.

In the chart below, responsibility for various aspects of organizing the translation of conference documents is assigned to either "Organizers and Writers" or "Translators." Many of the points made under 'Organizers and Writers' also apply to 'Translators'. For example, translators should use clear sentences, write for the intended audience and avoid jargon. Translators translate ideas or concepts, not just words. When the original document is written in clear language, there is usually no problem translating it into clear language. When an original document is not in clear language, the translator has to reformulate it to produce a clear language translation.



<b>For Organization and Writers</b>	<b>For Translators</b>
<p>Use translators who are familiar with the field.</p> <p>Involve translators from the beginning to avoid problems later. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A conference slogan which does not translate easily is a problem, especially since it is often used on T-shirts and buttons.</li> <li>• Some English words result in a longer text in French because of feminization. e.g. 'workers' becomes 'Ies travailleurs et les travailleuses'.</li> </ul>	
<p>Make a resource person available to the translators if they have questions.</p>	<p>Ask the organizers for a resource person you can contact if you have questions.</p>
<p>Provide the translator with all materials to be used in the conference, including illustrations, context, etc.</p>	<p>Contact the resource person to get all of the materials you need in order to understand the context and references.</p>
<p>Provide the translators with a bilingual list of already established titles and terminology.</p>	<p>If not provided, ask the resource person for a bilingual list of titles and terminology.</p>
<p>Make sure the original text is in clear language, keeping your intended audience in mind. Remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use words your reader understands</li> <li>• Avoid jargon and acronyms</li> <li>• Write in clear sentences, one idea per sentence</li> <li>• Write in the active voice</li> </ul>	<p>If the text is not in clear language, contact the writers or organizers.</p> <p>If the original text is in the passive voice, try to translate in the active voice.</p> <p>Reformulate or adapt the English to produce a clear French translation that makes sense and is relevant to a francophone audience (or vice-versa). Keep in mind the principles of clear language.</p>



For Organization and Writers	For Translators
	<p>Here is an example of a cultural adaptation.</p> <p>In English: As the Sweet Honey and the Rock song goes, 'We take more than a paycheck to our loved ones and families'. In other words, we also take home particular stresses and challenges.</p> <p>In French: Comme le dit la chanson de Claude Dubois, « il fallait pour mieux manger, serrer les dents et travailler. » Autrement dit, nous rentrons a la maison avec notre cheque de paie, mais aussi avec nos malaises et nos souds.</p>
<p>Use consistent terminology throughout the conference materials so as not to confuse people.</p>	<p>Use consistent terminology within your translations. Pay particular attention to this if more than one translator is involved.</p>
<p>If you cut and paste from documents already translated, provide the translator with a copy of the original translation or a reference to where to find it.</p> <p>When changes are made in one language to a document which has been translated, clearly note the changes in the document.</p>	<p>Contact the resource person to check if sections of the documents have already been translated.</p>
<p>Clarify the gender of individuals and their positions. This way, we know whether 'Kim' for example is male or female. This will determine the titles in French, as in 'directeur' or 'directrice,' 'president' or 'presidente'.</p>	<p>If gender lists are not provided, contact the organizers.</p> <p>Use non-gendered words in French wherever possible. For example: "l'equipe d'organisation" instead of 'les organisateurs et les organisatrices'.</p>



## **Clear Language Logistics CHECKLIST**

Here are a few other things to keep in mind as you plan the conference:

### **1. Room space and layout**

- Are the rooms large enough for the number of participants you expect?
- Will everyone be able to see and hear well?
- Will the space accommodate the activities you have planned? For example, can participants break out into small groups?
- Can you use tape on the walls to post visuals, flipchart paper, etc.?
- Are ALL the rooms accessible to participants in wheelchairs, scooters, etc.?
- Is there good light and air circulation?
- Will there be water provided at the tables?
- Is there a room where people can gather to network outside planned activities?
- Are the washrooms close by?

### **2. Signage**

- Make sure you have clear signs in both French and English to indicate where various activities are taking place, where the office and washrooms are, etc.



### **3. Name Tags**

- Make sure name tags are in large font (at least 16 point) and in bold letters.
- Use different coloured tags to identify staff, speakers, facilitators and participants by their name, organization and role.





## **Part III: Clear Language Resources**



## Clear Language Resources



### ***Making It Clear: Clear Language for Union Communications.***

Clear Language Binder and Screen (The Canadian Labour Congress - CLC)



The **binder** contains many resources on clear language, including 'before and after examples' and handouts.

The **screen** is a practical tool which can be applied to text. It is available in English and French on 3-hole punch for easy insertion in binders and conference kits.

The CLC also offers 9-hour and 5-day **workshops** on clear language and a train-the-trainer course for clear language facilitators. For more information on both materials and courses: [clcliteracy@clc-tc.ca](mailto:clcliteracy@clc-tc.ca).



### ***Thinking Equality When You Write.***

(The Canadian Union of Public Employees - CUPE) This is a series of checklists on 'thinking equality' in the form of dividers to insert into conference materials or use as stand-alone resources. CUPE has many other resources on clear language and literacy. For more information:

[literacy@cupe.ca](mailto:literacy@cupe.ca).



### ***Keep It Clear: A Steelworker Literacy Guide.***

(United Steelworkers - USW) This booklet situates clear language within the USW literacy program and includes an excellent 'keep it clear' checklist. For more information:

[literacy@usw.ca](mailto:literacy@usw.ca).



### ***The Clarity Kit: Effective Communication for Municipalities.***

(The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators – CAMA and the Canadian Union of Public Employees - CUPE) This clear language kit includes a 'clarity audit' as well as materials on clear language. Many of the resources in the kit are also useful for those outside the municipal sector. For

information on how to order: [literacy@cupe.ca](mailto:literacy@cupe.ca).

**The CLC, unions, federations of labour and district labour councils have many Literacy Working other resources available. Contact a member of the CLC Group for more information. Their contact information is listed on page 36.**



## Literacy Working Group Members

The CLC Literacy Working Group (LWG) includes union and federation representatives with an interest in literacy and clear language. The LWG meets twice a year to share information and resources, learn from our collective experiences and advise the CLC on literacy work. Contact your LWG representative for more information about what's going on in your organization.

<b>AFFILIATED UNIONS</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Tel.</b>	<b>Email</b>
Canadian Auto Workers (CAW)	Laruell Ritchie	416-497-4110	<a href="mailto:laurell.ritchie@caw.ca">laurell.ritchie@caw.ca</a>
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP)	Bob Hatfield	613-230-5800	<a href="mailto:rhatfield@cep.ca">rhatfield@cep.ca</a>
Canadian Union of Public Employers (CUPE)	Sylvia Sioufi	613-237-1590	<a href="mailto:ssioufi@cupe.ca">ssioufi@cupe.ca</a>
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)	Dave Bleakney	613-236-7328	<a href="mailto:dbleakney@cupw-sttp.org">dbleakney@cupw-sttp.org</a>
International Association of Machinists (IAM)	Gord Falconer	416-386-1789	<a href="mailto:gfalconer@iamaw.org">gfalconer@iamaw.org</a>
National Union of Public and General Employers (NUPGE)	Mike Luff	613-228-9800	<a href="mailto:mluff@nupge.ca">mluff@nupge.ca</a>
Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA)	Joe Pece	416-925-2054	<a href="mailto:j.pece@oecta.on.ca">j.pece@oecta.on.ca</a>
Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)	Howie West	613-560-4202	<a href="mailto:westh@psac.com">westh@psac.com</a>
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)	Linda MacKenzie-Nicholas	416-447-2311	<a href="mailto:mackenzie-nicholas@seiu.ca">mackenzie-nicholas@seiu.ca</a>
Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU)	Lesley Hammond	604-437-8601	<a href="mailto:lesley.hammond@twu-canada.ca">lesley.hammond@twu-canada.ca</a>
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)	Byan Neath	416-675-1104	<a href="mailto:bneath@ufcw.ca">bneath@ufcw.ca</a>
UNITE HERE	Barry Fowlie	416-441-1806	<a href="mailto:bfowlie@unitehere.ca">bfowlie@unitehere.ca</a>
UNITE HERE Local 75	Janet Dassinger	416-510-0887	<a href="mailto:janet59@sympatico.ca">janet59@sympatico.ca</a>
United Steelworkers (USW)	Jorge Garcia Orgales	416-544-5960	<a href="mailto:jorge@usw.ca">jorge@usw.ca</a>
<b>FEDERATIONS OF LABOUR</b>			
Alberta (AFL)	Karen Kennedy	780-423-9000	<a href="mailto:kkcupw5@telus.net">kkcupw5@telus.net</a>
British Columbia (BCFL)	Geoff Meggs	604-430-1421	<a href="mailto:geoffmeggs@bcfecl.com">geoffmeggs@bcfecl.com</a>
Manitoba (MFL)	Ann Robins	204-942-0343	<a href="mailto:arobins@cupe.ca">arobins@cupe.ca</a>
New Brunswick (NBFL)	Michel Boudreau	506-857-2125	<a href="mailto:ftbfl@nbnet.ca">ftbfl@nbnet.ca</a>
Newfoundland and Labrador (NLFL)	Margie Hancock	709-754-1660	<a href="mailto:mhancock@nlfl.nf.ca">mhancock@nlfl.nf.ca</a>
Nova Scotia (NS)	Linda Wentzel	902-634-4501	<a href="mailto:linda.wentzel@ns.sympatico.ca">linda.wentzel@ns.sympatico.ca</a>
Northern Territories (NTFL)	Steve Petersen	867-445-6604	<a href="mailto:peterssnwt@yahoo.ca">peterssnwt@yahoo.ca</a>
Ontario (OFL)	Pam Frache	416-443-7650	<a href="mailto:pfrache@ofl.ca">pfrache@ofl.ca</a>
Prince Edward Island (PEIFL)	Leo Cheverie	902-894-2802	<a href="mailto:lcheverie@upeic.ca">lcheverie@upeic.ca</a>
Quebec (FTQ)	Louise Miller	514-383-8015	<a href="mailto:lmiller@ftq.qc.ca">lmiller@ftq.qc.ca</a>
Saskatchewan (SFL)	Debbie Lussier	306-515-0197	<a href="mailto:sfl.debbie@sasktel.net">sfl.debbie@sasktel.net</a>
Yukon (YTFL)	Alex Furlong	867-667-2331	<a href="mailto:afurlong@yukonfed.com">afurlong@yukonfed.com</a>
Labour Education Centre (LEC)	Anna Larsen	416-537-6532	<a href="mailto:alarsen@laboureducation.org">alarsen@laboureducation.org</a>
Canadian Labour Congress	Tamara Levine	613-526-7437	<a href="mailto:tlevine@clc-ctc.ca">tlevine@clc-ctc.ca</a>





## **A last word ...**

These guidelines are a work in progress that began with preparations for the 2006 CLC Labour Education Conference and Literacy Forum. We hope they will be useful to you in planning your next conference and that your efforts will result in a more accessible event through using clear language. We also hope you will share your experiences and any new ideas you come up with at [clcliteracy@clc-ctc.ca](mailto:clcliteracy@clc-ctc.ca).

GOOD LUCK!

