

Structuring your research paper

Usually 9:00 to 17:00
with sandwich lunch



A full day of concepts
for 15 to 25 participants

A gap of about two weeks
so participants can do home-
work (and we can look at it)

Usually 20 min. each
over one or two days



An individual tutorial
for each participant in turn



As solid support, each participant receives a copy of *Trees, maps, and theorems*, our acclaimed book about “effective communication for rational minds.”

Our most demanded program on effective written documents combines a full day of concepts with individual homework. Though compact, it covers all that participants must know to improve their papers, reports, or other written documents significantly, as evidenced by the homework they complete.

For concepts, we run a directed discussion in plenary group about structure at all levels: document, sections, paragraphs, sentences—with focus on the abstract or executive summary. This discussion builds on the experience of the participants (as readers or writers) and on samples they sent ahead of time. This highly interactive approach is effective and appreciated: it is strongly rooted in the participants' reality, self-adapts to their current level, accommodates inhomogeneous groups, and makes for an engaging and pleasant learning experience.

As homework task, each participant must select a document, critique its structure, and improve its abstract or summary. He or she then receives detailed feedback on it from one of us during a private, individual tutorial of typically 20 minutes. This exercise allows participants to assimilate the concepts we discussed by recognizing opportunities for improvement in the writing of others and, through feedback, in their own.

Among success factors, we must receive a list of participants (with their e-mail addresses) three weeks before the concepts, so we can contact them to collect documents, and we must run all the sessions in a flexible room of the appropriate size. We must be able to remove all tables and set up chairs only, and we need a bright, high-resolution projector (and screen) and something to write on, such as a whiteboard or flip chart.