

Give jargon the boot to enhance understanding

As association communicators, we sometimes find ourselves using long and complicated words when simple, direct language will do. Typically called “doublespeak” or “jargon,” this complex language sets up barriers to understanding. Even those who are directly involved with the association may not get a clear idea of the message you want to convey. Others will either get an obscure idea of the message, or no message at all because they have quit reading or listening entirely.

With a little effort you can eliminate jargon from your speaking and writing. First, though, you need to recognize it when you see it. It’s often couched in such comfortable terminology that spotting it may be a challenge.

Listed here are some words that are frequently used, followed by a simpler, more direct way of saying the same thing:

<i>Instead of</i>	<i>Try</i>
educator or learning facilitator or classroom manager or instructional specialist	teacher
learning process	teaching
learning environment	classroom
spend time on task	study
engage in audible verbal self-reinforcement	learn English
instructional swim	swimming lesson
implement a program	start a program
implement an evaluation program or conduct a needs assessment or implement a needs assessment strategy	to test
articulation	selecting subjects
transportation component	bus
certified transportation specialist	bus driver
outdoor education interdepartmental conference	camping trip
descending timing device	stopwatch
primary or secondary educational institutions	schools
healthy interface	classroom discussion
life-coping skills	skills
deferred maintenance	not doing repairs
deficient at a grading period	failing
human kinetics, applied life studies	physical education
movement exercises	sports
maximize their potential	do their best
reinforce their idea	repeat
achieve academic success	succeed
develop individual ability	do your best
economic literacy	understand business
self-realization	be all that you can
lifelong process	lasts a lifetime

Adapted from an article written by Ann Hagen, communications consultant from CommunicationPlus