

MemoMasters!

It's a club.

It's a community.

Reports, illustrations, more.

Write so well, you make it look easy!



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

Planning Associates Critical Think Piece
September 1, 2015
Dr. Kelly Keefe



Crisis in USACE Planning Communication!



USACE Planning writing quality
is identified as a problem in
forum after forum...

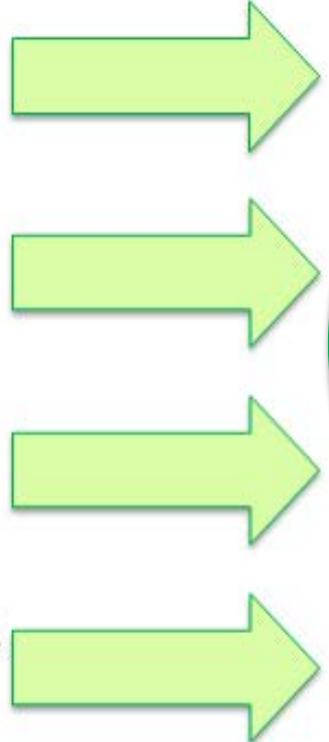


The Vision: How It Should Be



Clear,
concise

The image shows a stack of project reports. The top report is titled 'Mount St. Helens Project' and features a photograph of a river. A green circle is overlaid on the reports, containing the text 'Clear, concise'. The reports also display the US Army Corps of Engineers logo and the text 'US Army Corps of Engineers Portland District' and 'Lehigh Lane, 8 January 2009'.



Understand
and support!

Four green arrows point from the left towards the right, indicating a flow or transition from the reports to the final goal.

MemoMasters! A Solution

Writing

Speaking

Communication

Non-verbal



MemoMasters! A Solution



Writing

**Improve Planning
documents,
develop
community,
network our
resources.**

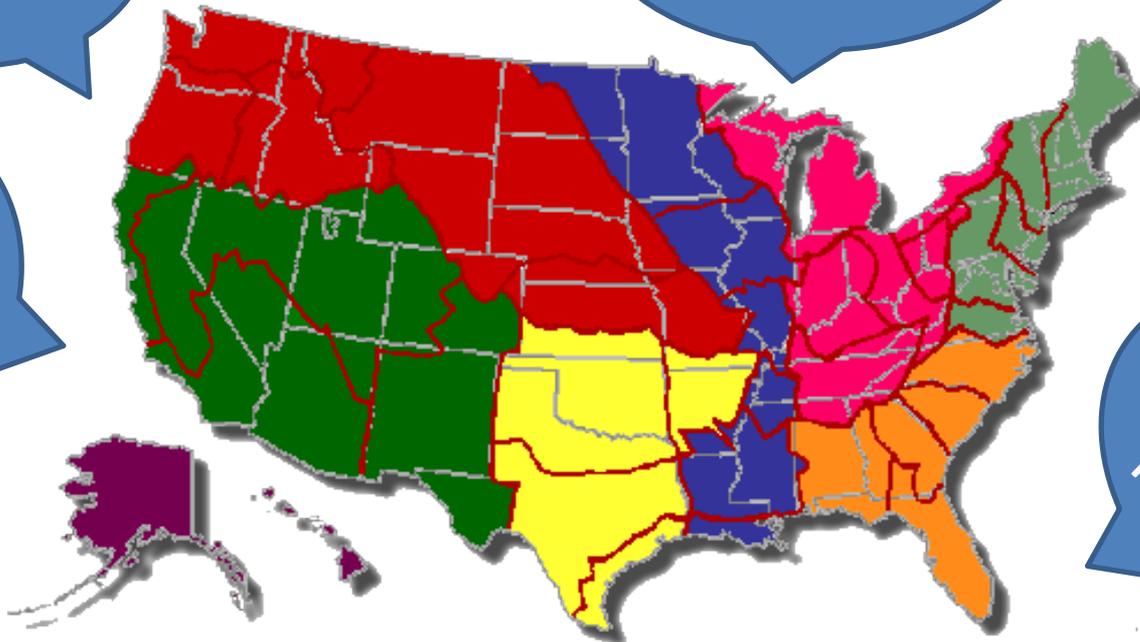
Query of USACE Interest

GREAT
IDEA!!

SUMMARIES
NEED HELP!

MEMOS
NEED
HELP!

REPORTS
NEED
HELP!

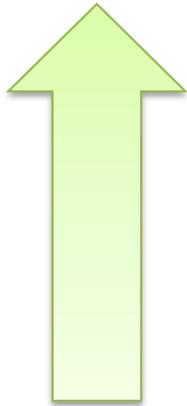


RESPONSES
TO
CONCERNS
NEED HELP!

100% of national respondents expressed need.

Achieving Excellence

Criteria and feedback



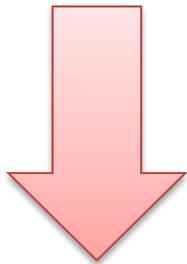
Critical thinking

Document organization

Decision-critical information

Common language

Fix the problems



Extraneous info

Put supporting info where it belongs

Remove jargon, writing problems

Criteria for Great Writing	Partner-reader Assessment and Suggestions
Did the author clearly identify the question or problem being addressed?	
Clearly, up-front	
Somewhat clearly	
Not clear	
Did the author provide info that addressed the question or problem?	
Yes	
I'm not sure	
Some/ No	
How much content seemed extraneous or non-essential to answer the question or problem?	
0 – 10%	
10 – 60%	
60 – 100%	
Were the main points easy to identify?	
Yes	
Some were/ No	
Were the main points in a logical order?	
Yes	
Some were/ No	
Was there one point per paragraph, with supporting sentences?	
Yes	
No	
Were sentences too short or too long?	
Just right. Nice flow.	
Too short; choppy.	
Long; many ideas per sentence.	



Jacksonville MemoMasters!

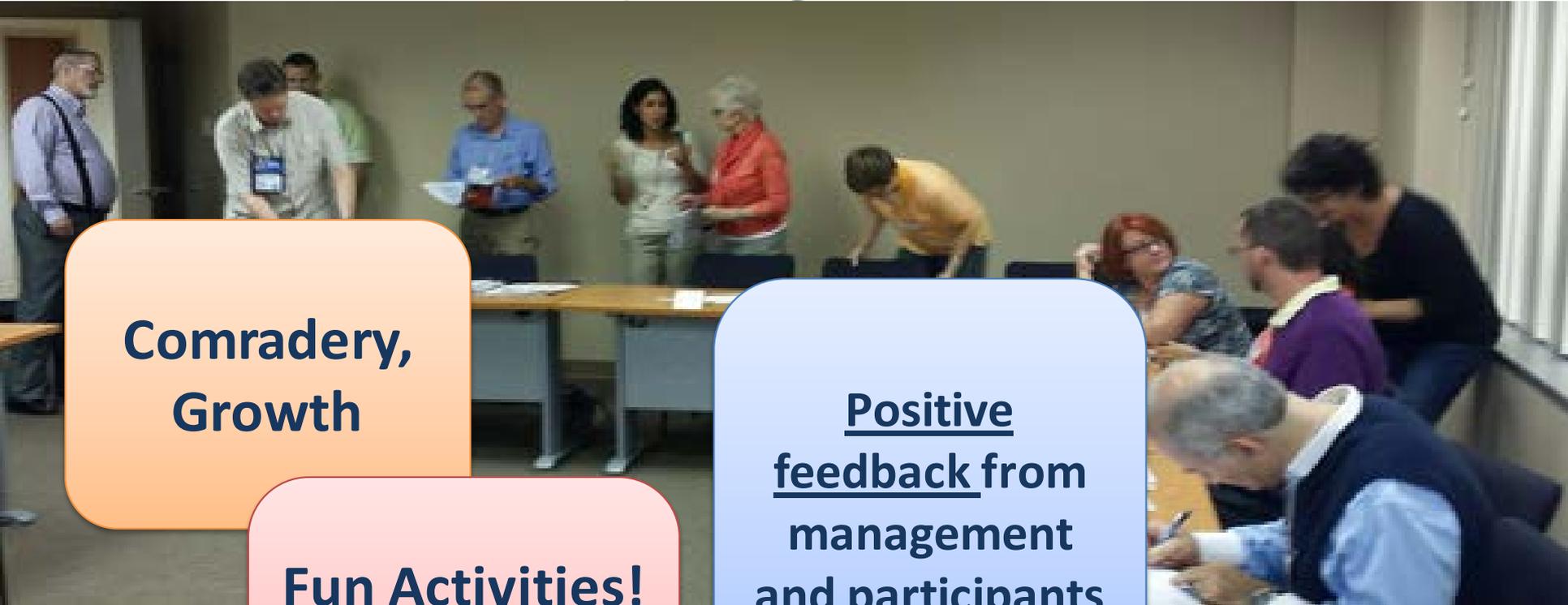
**Comradery,
Growth**

Fun Activities!



**Positive
feedback from
management
and participants**

What's next?



Fulfilling the Vision

Continue ...



Jacksonville's club meetings,
Content improvement.

Multiply...

Any USACE office can start a
MemoMasters! with starter kit.



Headquarters Planning Community of Practice Support...

“Train the trainer” for district leads.

Charge code for district leads.

Copies of starter kit for districts.

Support webinars and/or annual workshop.

Acknowledgements

Maria Lantz, Tiffany Vanosdall

**Stacy Langsdale, Patrice Morey,
Camie Knollenberg**

Query respondents

Planning Associates Panel



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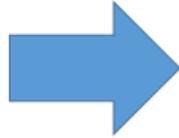
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**The following slides are hidden
slides**



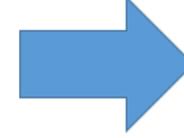
Problem:

Ineffective writing in USACE Planning documents buries our messages.



Vision:

Our documents will be critically thought-out, concise, and well written for audiences of all backgrounds.



Assertion:

To achieve the vision, the USACE Planning community must master writing.

How?

MemoMasters! includes USACE-specific writing lessons taught in a community of USACE Planners.

MemoMasters! focuses on critical thinking for writing, community learning, mentoring, tools, techniques, and fun!



A **MemoMasters!** training club may be started by any USACE office.

The **central organizer** 😊 provides support and a start-up kit to each **Point of Contact** ⭐ who wants to start a club.

USACE headquarters Planning Community of Practice leaders ☀️ can fund copies of the start-up kits, POC \$ for 3.5 hours/month, “train the trainer” class, webinars and annual workshop with great writing coaches.

Teach Planners to Write So Well, They Make It Look Easy

Query Results: Focus on these documents!

SUMMARIES: Exec summaries, 1-pg briefs, J sheets, fact sheets, briefing slides
(26 votes)

STUDY REPORTS: Integrated feasibility report, 100 pgs, CAP reports (21 votes)

REPORT SYNOPSES/RR/DMP/DL (20 votes)

7 - Federal Interest

7 - Project benefits

6 - Without project condit'n; existing condit'ns

6 - Plan selection

6 - Appendices

MEMOS: Memoranda for Record, Transmittal Memos (23 votes)

ISSUE PAPERS: Issue papers, white papers, technical papers (13 votes)

EMAIL: Business email, identifying situation, what is being asked? (9 votes)

RESPONSES: PGM responses, Congressional responses/ IEPR
response/responses to stakeholder concerns (9 votes)

POST-AUTHORIZATION REPORTS (9 votes)

Query Results - Details

26 - 1-pg briefs/ Exec summary/J sheet/fact sheet/briefing slides

20 - Report synopses/ RR/ DMP/DL

17 - Integrated feas report/ 100 pgs

13 - Issue papers/technical papers; 13 - MFRs

10 - Transmittal memos

9 - Email (biz email id'ing a situation); 9 - Responses: PGM responses, Congressional responses/ IEP response/responses to stakeholder concerns; 9 - Post authorization reports

7 - Federal Interest; 7 - Project benefits

6 - Report - w/o project condit'n; existing condit'ns; 6 - Plan selection; 6 - Appendices

5 - News release/talking points; 5 - Mtng agenda w/ desired outcome and approp time allocated

4 - CAP report (FI determination, and study report); 4 – Graphics; 4 - Scoping letters

3 - AM & Monitoring Plans

1 – Resume; 1 - "Letter Reports"; 1 - Implementation guidance (advanced skill)

Other notes -

6 - Problem is lack of proof reading (not necessarily poor writing)

8 - NEPA docs (hate the format!)