

Title A: Synopsis: How Talking to Students in the Right Language Leads to Greater Resonance, Cut-Through, and Conversion

Subtitle A: Avoiding academic-speak can allow colleges and universities to better connect with and engage their students.

Title B: Improving the Student Experience Begins with the Language You Use to Communicate

Subtitle B: Connecting with students in plain language versus academic-speak can lead to greater conversations, cut-through, and conversions.

Title C: Now You're Talking My Language!

Subtitle C: Here's how you can use the right language to make better, more meaningful connections with your current and prospective students.



[Image source](#)

When targeting students, colleges and universities can easily get caught up in long-form academic-speak. It's in their very nature to deliver high-end, formal education, and the tone of their communications often matches. But while there is a priority to position the institution in a professional, academic light, taking this same tone when trying to connect with students doesn't always present a favourable first impression.

When students are exploring their education options, they have unique concerns throughout the process. Many may be anxious to leave behind the familiar in favour of unknown opportunities.

Universities can cloud this critical research phase by placing their core messages to prospective students in a web of academic-speak that students must dissect to fully understand and connect with. This does little to allay their concerns or anxieties, both of which can prevent them from achieving their full potential on campus.

Instead, colleges and universities should approach communications from the student's perspective and choose language that better resonates and connects with their intended audience.

Let's look at some key strategies for success.

Using Natural Language vs. Academic Jargon

Using plain language in an academic setting may seem like it goes against the very essence of the environment. After all, students attend a college or university to increase their communication skills and achieve a higher level of thinking.

But in today's modern academic setting, the need for technical language is fading. Complex communications do little to foster the type of inclusive environment that many schools are trying to create for their students.

Students who are embarking on their educational journey are less likely to be fazed or impressed by a school that doesn't recognize that they are students, not professional academics. Current and prospective students may already be apprehensive or confused about the next four years of their education, and using complicated language may only fuel those fears.

If you want to build meaningful connections, shift your communication strategy to plain language that students don't need to translate. Academic language has a specific place in the university environment, but its target audience isn't its student population. Rather, academic language and tone are best reserved

for those who are seasoned in higher education institutes, such as researchers, instructors, or campus leaders.

Create Bite-Size Content vs. Long Form Content



[Image source](#)

When entering a new school setting (or even a new academic year), students can often feel like they're drowning in information overload. Not only do they have new classes, teachers, and surroundings to get used to, but they must also adapt to the university's policies and culture at large.

It's common practice for universities to provide onboarding and orientation for new students before starting the new school year, but the method in which you deliver orientation content can have a lot to do with how well the student receives and remembers it.

For simplicity's sake, universities should move away from long-form content in favour of short, bite-sized pieces of information that get straight to the point and leave little room for misinterpretation.

A [report by the Dresden University of Technology](#) in Germany indicates that short-form content can boost

retention by more than 20% compared to long-form content. In the study, researchers reviewed how presenting small pieces of information followed by questions can achieve greater results than delivering large chunks of information followed by fewer questions.

The results placed microlearning as a clear winner: respondents answered questions in 28% less time and performed 20% better when given content in small doses.

One of the takeaways of the study is that larger amounts of material place greater demands on learners and forces them to do more work than necessary to achieve the same results. Stockpiling information slows down the retrieval process and can lead to uncertainty as to whether the learner understood the information in the first place.

Deliver Insight Straight from the Horse's Mouth



[Image source](#)

If your goal is to go from language to leads, there's arguably no one better to connect with prospective students than current students and alumni. These are your best resources for helping prospective students get to know your university from a student perspective.

Take time to leverage student reviews and testimonials. Recruit student ambassadors to take part in orientation. They can offer personal insights, best practices, and tips for success that relate to a new student's needs.

Final Thoughts

Building positive, meaningful relationships with students requires campus leaders to meet where students already are. It's the university's responsibility to understand their students' needs, then learn how to connect with students based on their expectations. Everyone from educators to school leaders should take an active role in shaping the student experience into an inclusive environment where all students are positioned to thrive.