

## Planning Guide for your User Tests

Topic \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Test Reader

What specific group of people are your target readers?

Can you find individuals from this group who would be willing to serve as test readers?  
Who are they?

If you cannot obtain test readers from your target audience, what individuals could you ask to help who closely resemble your target readers?

In what ways do these individuals resemble your target readers?

In what significant ways do they differ?

How will the differences affect the way you interpret the test results?

## **Test Location**

Can you conduct your test in the same place that your target readers will actually use your instructions?

If not, what location can you use that closely resembles that location?

What are the similarities of this location to the actual one?

What are the significant differences?

How will the differences affect the way you interpret your test results?

## **Test Conditions**

Can you create test conditions that are identical to the conditions under which your target readers will use your instructions?

If not, what conditions resembling the real ones can you test under?

What significant features of the actual conditions will be preserved under the modified conditions?

What significant features will you be unable to preserve?

How will the differences affect the way you interpret your test results?

## **Readers' Tasks**

Can you ask your readers to perform exactly the same tasks your target readers will perform when reading your instructions?

If not, how can you make the test readers' tasks resemble as closely as possible your target readers' tasks?

Which tasks can you preserve?

Which ones must you eliminate or modify?

How will the differences affect the way you interpret your test results?

## **Information Gathering**

How will you gather information concerning your instructions' effectiveness at achieving their enabling element of purpose?

How will you gather information concerning your instructions' effectiveness at achieving their persuasive component of purpose? In answering, remember that you can only measure change if you have information about your readers' attitudes before they read your instructions as well as after.

How will you gather information while the test readers are using the instructions? In answering, remember that your aim is to gather as much information as possible without making your test readers read differently than they would if you weren't present.

How will you gather information from the test readers concerning their overall responses to your instructions?

How will you obtain your test readers' suggestions for improving your instructions?

## **Test Draft**

Is your test draft identical or else very close to the draft you intend to give your target readers?

- Text?
- Figures?
- Layout?

If not, what are the significant differences?

How will these differences affect the way you interpret your test results?

## **Focus**

Are there any aspects of your instructions that you especially want to gain information about from your readers' point of view?

If so, what are they?

How will you gather information from your test readers about these aspects?