There is a lot to learn about communication and lots of great resources to help you! To get you started, here is a list of resources that cover various topics around communication. I recommend spending a few hours watching videos of good presenters and browsing through the resources you’ll find on the blogs. Pick and choose those that might be most helpful to you.

**Presentation resources**

**General guidelines about how to present.** 10 commandments of powerpoint: <http://power-points.blogspot.com/2005/09/10-commandments-of-powerpoint.html>

**"Every Presentation Ever: Communication FAIL."** - hilarious video with some great insights. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIABo0d9MVE&feature=player_embedded>

<http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/> - a good resource on all things related to presentations. Has some useful articles, and her downloadable guide is very handy. Browse through her articles for everything from formatting to connecting with your audience.

A few examples of excellent presentations:

**Hans Rosling**: A talk using super cool software to make data interactive and fascinating. Take a look not only for the visuals, but for his engaging speaking style on what are otherwise dry topics. (This is only one of his great talks, you can find many more on TED.com) <http://www.ted.com/talks/hans_rosling_reveals_new_insights_on_poverty.html>

**Kathy Sierra, “Creating Passionate Users”**: A nice video focused on how to connect with your audience. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSlRd6MnDv8&feature=youtube_gdata_player>

**Nancy Duarte: The secret structure of great talks”**: Worth watching not only for the visuals, but for the discussion of how to craft the underlying structure of a presentation so that it engages and resonates with audiences. Highly recommended. <http://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks.html>

**Seth Godin**: a presentation without slides that talks about education. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXpbONjV1Jc&feature=youtu.be>

**Ester Duflo, Social Experiments to Fight Poverty:** A nice TED talk with pretty good visuals, on an evaluation-related topic. See how someone can make a discussion of experiments interesting! <http://www.ted.com/talks/esther_duflo_social_experiments_to_fight_poverty.html>

**TED:** spend some time on this website and see some of the amazing presentations, with and without slides. There are lots around rigorous and challenging topics (e.g., science, experimentation, etc.) which are worth seeing in order to understand how very difficult topics can be expressed in a clear and engaging way. [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)

**Relevant blogs and websites**

\*These are one of the best places to learn about good communication and visualization. Blogs do a great job of centralizing resources. Spend a few hours perusing these blogs and see what you can find.

**Stephanie Evergreen:** an evaluator with a great blog on "Intentional Data Visualization & Reporting". She has some great resources and links a lot of her posts back to evaluation, which is handy!

<http://www.evergreenevaluation.com/>

**Presentation Zen**: Don’t miss this one! A great blog with lots of ideas for presentations, and tons of resources on everything presentation related. This is worth a few hours of your time for sure.

<http://www.presentationzen.com/presentationzen/>

**Flowing Data**: a blog with some nice examples of visualization, though it tends more towards fancy visualizations.

<http://flowingdata.com/>

**Junk Charts**: nice examples of data visualization from various sources

<http://junkcharts.typepad.com/junk_charts/>

**Storytelling with data**: A great blog for seeing examples of how to improve charts. It includes lots of real-life and step-by-step examples of how charts can be made more meaningful through better formatting. Make sure you check out the pre-made templates for creating charts (<http://www.storytellingwithdata.com/2012/02/no-more-excuses-for-bad-simple-charts.html>).

<http://www.storytellingwithdata.com/>

**Duarte Design**: A leader in structure, storytelling, and visual design. Make sure you look at Nancy Duarte’s books “Slide:ology” and “Resonate” as well.

<http://blog.duarte.com/>

**Olivia Mitchell**: A nice compilation of resources. It’s worth signing up for her free downloadable booklet. <http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/>

**Some relevant authors and books**

**Nancy Duarte**: “Slide:ology”, “Resonate” (I recommend the interactive iBook if you have that technology)

**Garr Reynolds**: “Presentation Zen”, “The Naked Presenter”

**Edward Tufte**: “The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint: Pitching Out Corrupts Within”, “The Visual Display of Quantitative Information”, “Beautiful Evidence”

**Dan Roam**: “The Back of the Napkin”, “

**Where to get images**

**Microsoft**: This website interfaces with istockphoto and fotolia, but will help you search the free images. It has a pretty good gallery of images, particularly if you are using images that are ‘representative’ of a concept. <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/images/>

[www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com) – a key resource for photos, but most require a fee.

<http://us.fotolia.com/> – another good paid resource.

<http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/> - another free resource, though you might have to wade through a lot of crummy pictures.

**Take your own** – there are lots of resources on how to take your own pictures for presentations. Try googling the topic and see what you can find!

**Formatting tools**

**Microsoft Word** – don’t underestimate the value of this for creating visually appealing reports. You don’t need any fancy software; this program is much more powerful than you think. Spend a little time getting familiar with how to create nice visual formats using already existing templates and QuickParts. Make sure you understand how to use in-built styles and automatic numbering to make your life easier (honestly, this will save you hours).

**Microsoft Publisher** – see if this is already on your computer, since many people have it and don’t realize it. It’s a great tool for creating visually pleasing newsletters, brochures, handouts, etc. Consider using it to produce visually pleasing deliverables for stakeholders.

**Microsoft Excel** – despite the horror that is the default charts, a few simple changes to formatting can produce quite nice charts without any additional fancy software. Learn to use the formatting tools to their full advantage. If you need consistency across many charts, consider using chart templates to simplify formatting. And please…do not use any 3D charts. These are a terrible practice and should be avoided at all costs. There are some very good templates to get you started on the road to better looking charts, like this one: <http://www.storytellingwithdata.com/2012/02/no-more-excuses-for-bad-simple-charts.html>.

**Kuler**: A nice tool that will help you find or create very nice color schemes. Consider using this instead of Word’s existing color schemes to create a match to your client’s colors, or to better visually represent a certain type of theme (e.g., environmental, early childhood).

<https://kuler.adobe.com/>

**Instant-eyedropper**: This fun little tool will allow to you determine the RGB value of any color on your screen. You can use this to match to a client’s color scheme, or to pick out certain colors from a picture. It only gives you the values as a hex color, so you’ll also need to use a website like <http://easycalculation.com/color-coder.php> to translate it into a color that can work with Word or Excel.

<http://instant-eyedropper.com/>

**Picture Palette**: Similar to the instant-eyedropper combined with Kuler, but in app form. <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/picturepalette/id527095741?mt=8>

**Other useful things**

**IDRC Data Visualization Review**: This report discusses best practices in visualization and actually looks at visualizations in some IDRC work, and analyzes them in terms of how they could better communicate the message. Very interesting read. <http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Documents/Amanda-Cox-report-Final-English-07-May-2012.pdf>

**Infographics**

\*Disclaimer: Many infographics are crummy if we consider their ability to clearly convey a message. Remember, infographics should not be about ‘pretty’, they should be about creating a visual representation of knowledge. Thoughtfully constructed infographics can be very useful, but many are just awful messes of image and color. Be a wise creator and consumer of infographics.

<http://www.knightfoundation.org/kaboom-infographic/>

Some reports with good structure ideas:

Marsh, J. A., Springer, M. G., McCaffrey, D. F., Yuan, K., Epstein, S., Koppich, J., Kalra, N., et al. (2011). *A Big Apple for Educators: New York City’s Experiment with Schoolwide Performance Bonuses* (No. ISBN 978-0-8330-5251-3). RAND.

Gross, B., & Pochop, K. M. (2008). “How charter schools organize for instruction.” Available from <http://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/pub_hfr08_ch2_dec08_0.pdf>

Mathematica. (2011). *The National Study of Charter Management Organization (CMO) Effectiveness*. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/media/%28cmo_final%20_report%2011%2002%2011.pdf>

Hoxby, C. M., Murarka, S., & Kang, J. (2009). How New York City’s charter schools affect achievement. *The New York City Charter Schools Evaluation Project 2009*.