

Making Research Matter: Translating Rural Research into Action

Camilo Jiménez
Heather Douglas
Damilola Oyewale
Ryan Gibson



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Territorial Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the Attawandaron people on whose traditional territory the University of Guelph resides and offer our respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours as we strive to strengthen our relationships with them.

Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we learn and work.

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House Keeping

- If you get disconnected, please re-join with the same hyperlink.
- You are welcome to have your video on throughout the webinar.
- We ask everyone to mute their microphone unless talking to alleviate background noise.
- We will record the webinar and post online. Please do not share any information on the webinar that you would not share in other public forums.
- A copy of the slides will be shared with everyone.



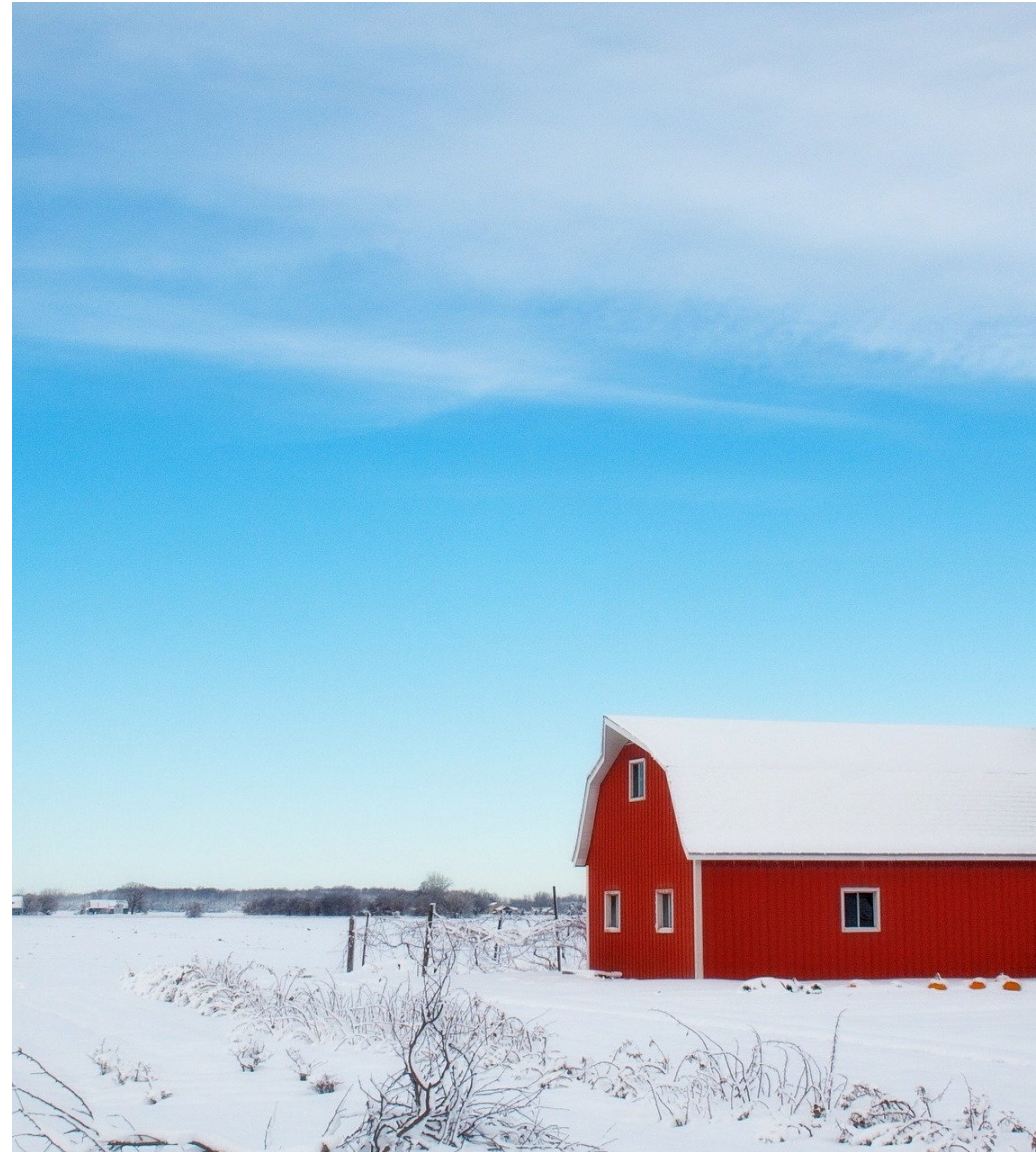
Road Map

- Connecting the Dots Initiative
- Research Summaries
- Research videos
- Knowledge mobilization strategies
- Discussions



Workshop Objectives

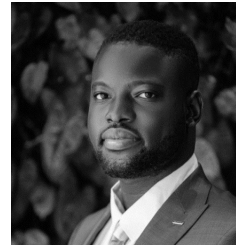
- To share lessons learned from the Connecting the Dots initiative about creating the plain language summaries, videos, and knowledge mobilization
- To showcase, through interactive discussions, tools and techniques used
- To identify strategies for amplifying research to larger audiences



Facilitators



Heather
Douglas



Damilola
Oyewale



Camilo
Jimenez
Gonzalez



Ryan
Gibson

Resources

- All of today's resources are available online
 - Slide deck
 - Resource guides
 - Research videos and summaries



RESOURCES

Connecting the Dots KTT Initiative



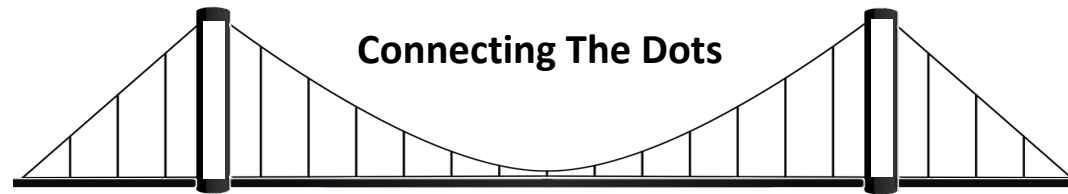
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Context

How can universities better connect research with rural practice? A lot of research never reaches the people who could use it.



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& **GUELPH**
Partner
Universities

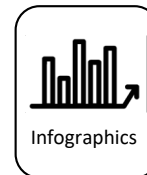


Connecting The Dots

Strategic – Intentional
Knowledge Mobilization

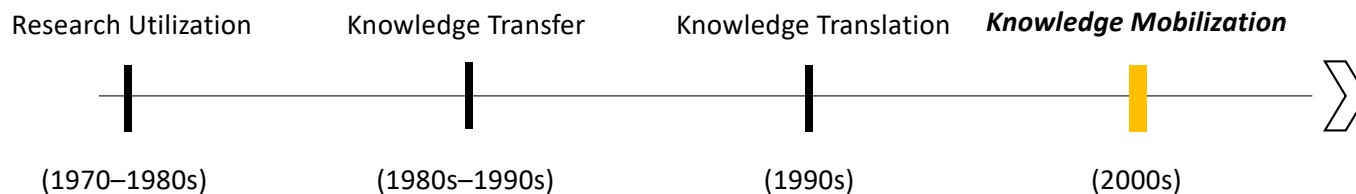
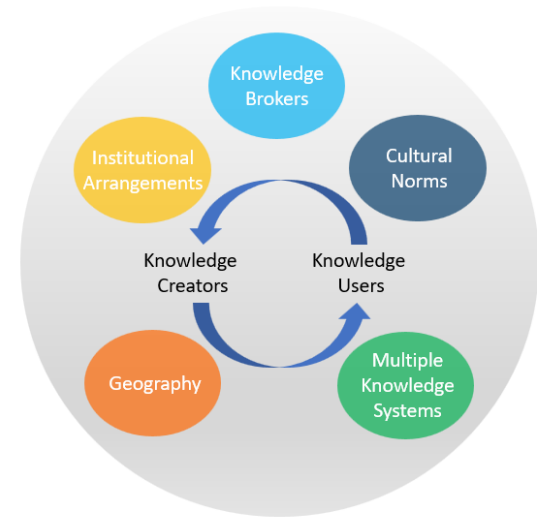


Rural Partners



What is Knowledge Mobilization?

- Knowledge Mobilization refers to a series of concepts and processes focused on how knowledge is created, shared, and adapted beyond its original setting.
- Knowledge Mobilization seeks to ensure a flow of knowledge between creators and users. At its core, strives to ensure research is useful



- Relational model
- Multiple actors
- Multiple knowledge systems
- Place-based / context-specific

Project Overview: Research Team and Illustrative Partners in Sharing Information

Main Objective

The **Connecting The Dots (CTD)** initiative is intended to mobilize rural research into accessible, actionable formats that strengthen connections between knowledge producers and rural communities, businesses, and organizations across rural Ontario, fostering resilient futures for rural Ontarians.



Ryan Gibson



Sara Epp



Silvia Sarapura



Belinda Leach



Wayne Caldwell



Damilola Oyewale



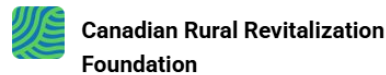
Heather Douglas



Camilo Jiménez



Ashleigh Domingo



People's Archive of Rural Ontario



Connecting The Dots in Action: Knowledge Mobilization Processes

1. Identification

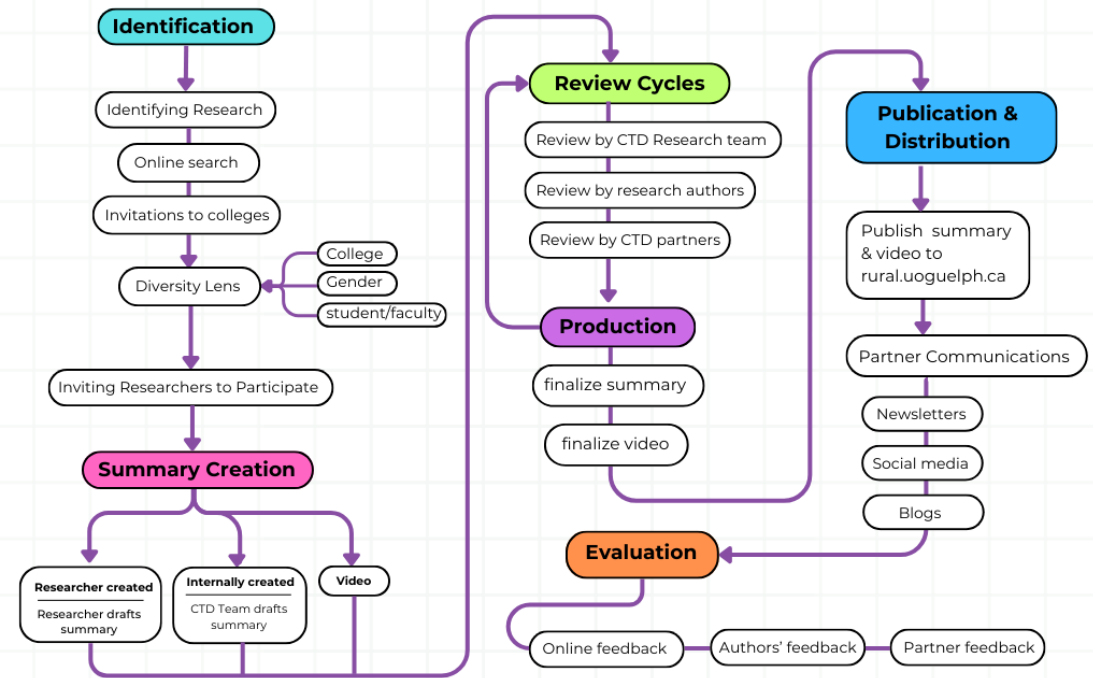
2. Summary Creation

3. Review Cycles







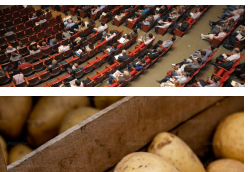
4. Production

5. Publication and Distribution

6. Evaluation



Connecting The Dots in Action: Production and Review, Academic Units and Topics

| College of Biological Science | College of Arts | Ontario Veterinary College | College of Social and Applied Human Sciences | Gordon S. Lang School of Business and Economics | College of Engineering and Physical Sciences | Ontario Agricultural College |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Perspectives in Food Security and Sovereignty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Mobility and Regional Inequality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreational Infrastructure and Environmental Health Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer-led Research and Ecological Farming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community based-rural sport development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Resource Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Governance Sustainable Agriculture |

Lessons Learned from Creating Plain Language Summaries from Published Research



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What are Plain Language Summaries within Knowledge Mobilization?



- Plain language summaries are a foundational tools within the knowledge mobilization workflow
- They provide the essential translation of academic studies into written and visual language that rural communities, organizations, businesses, and policymakers can easily understand

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Mapping Women's Community Sport Participation to Inform Sport Development Initiatives: A Case Study of Row Ontario



INTRODUCTION
This document summarizes of a journal article by Kyle A. Rich, Emily Moore, Jeffrey Boggs and Ann Pegoraro in *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living* in 2022.

OVERVIEW
This study looked at where and how women and girls participate in rowing across Ontario, using membership data from Row Ontario, the provincial sport organization for rowing. By mapping participation patterns, the researchers found important differences between urban and rural regions showing how geography, age, and local conditions shape who gets involved in sport. The study also revealed that women make up most of the organization's members, which is unusual in Canada, where women are generally less active in organized sports. These findings can help tailor sport programs that reflect local needs, build on existing strengths in rural areas, and make opportunities for sport and recreation more inclusive across Ontario.



Research Results

- 1. Regional Differences Matter:** The province was divided into eight regions, each with distinct age patterns, demographics, and participation rates, showing that "one-size-fits-all" programs do not work everywhere.
- 2. Strong Female Participation:** Across all regions, women represented the majority of participants (over 70% in some northern and rural regions) suggesting strong community engagement and untapped potential to expand women's sports.
- 3. Age and Retention Patterns:** In some regions, participants were older, suggesting a need for outreach to younger women. In others, the challenge was retaining young adults beyond their early twenties.
- 4. Contextual Barriers:** Rural areas face unique challenges, such as distance to water bodies and limited sport infrastructure, highlighting the importance of place-based approaches to planning and sport development.

Why This Matters
Understanding where and how women and girls participate in sport helps make rural planning and sport policy more equitable and responsive. By supporting community-based and regionally tailored sport programs, especially in northern and rural Ontario, this research points to ways of strengthening public health, social connection, and local resilience through inclusive sport participation.

FURTHER INFORMATION
The full publication titled "Mapping Women's Community Sport Participation to Inform Sport Development Initiatives: A Case Study of Row Ontario" can be accessed online through *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*. See more <https://www.krichsportandrec.com/sportpolicyimplementation>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
This research summary was generated as part of the [Connecting the Dots](#) initiative. This research is funded by the [Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance](#), a collaboration between the Government of Ontario and the University of Guelph.

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WWW.RURALDEV.CA

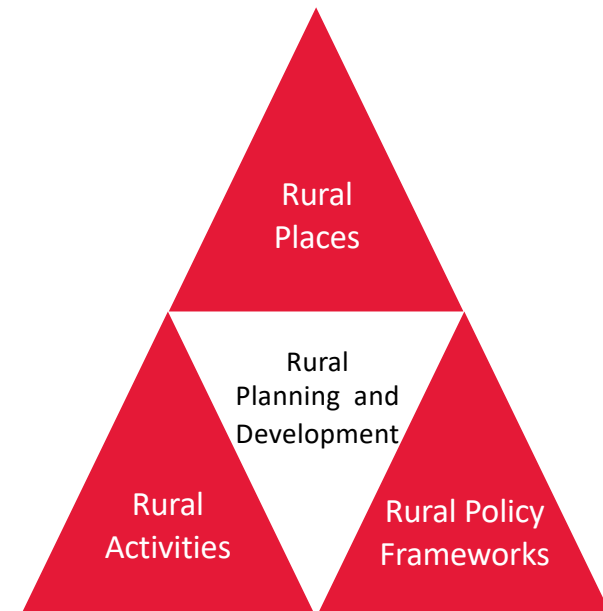
Step 1. Study Selection: Methodology and Criteria

1. Key categories for identifying the intersections in Rural Planning and Development

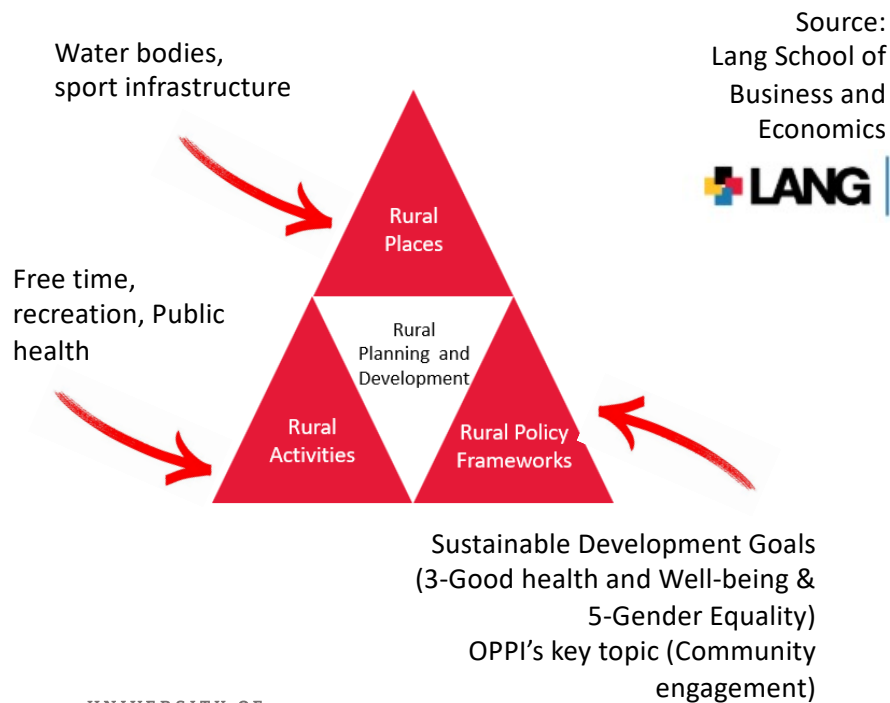
Main Sources of studies: University- and college-based research, academic journals, research networks, and websites.

Keywords Extraction:

- Current thematic agendas of rural organizations (e.g., ROI, OPPI, OMAFA) on rural processes, challenges, priorities, etc.
- Particular challenges addressed in the media, social networks (e.g., housing crisis)
- Themes addressed in planning curricula and more.



Step 1. Study Selection: Methodology and Criteria



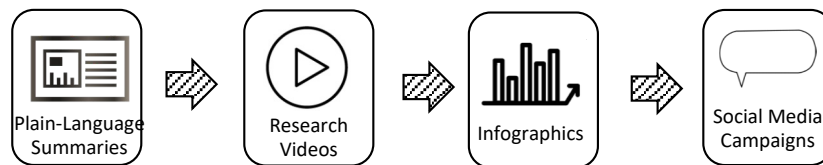
Source:
Lang School of
Business and
Economics



- How does this research relate rural place(s), rural communities and models or regulatory frameworks?
- How does this research help us better understand, plan for, or strengthen sustainable rural futures in Ontario?
- How does this research align with current concerns from rural organizations and communities?
- How does this study address questions related to public interest and the improvement of quality of life in rural communities?

Step 2. Establish Communication and Approval from Authors and/or Coauthors

Communicate early with study authors using clear, standardized templates to streamline approvals and support effective publication of summaries and follow up outputs (e.g., videos, infographics).



Step 3. Deep Reading and Extraction / Example

Extract Core Elements

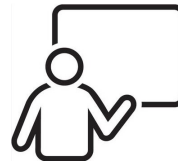
- ✓ The main research question and challenge(s) for rural life
- ✓ The methodology (in simple terms)
- ✓ The most important findings
- ✓ Practical and/or policy implications
- ✓ Any regional or rural-specific insights

Ask yourself:

- ✓ What are the 3-5 insights someone in a rural municipality should know?
- ✓ What would a community organization find useful?
- ✓ What might change because this research exists?

Focus on what matters most for rural audiences; avoid unnecessary technical detail, and consult authors when technical aspects are essential for understanding broader implications.

Example: Methodology Vs Key facts



In the sport participation study, understanding the methodology defined as “spatial analysis” was less important than explaining key insights related to regional differences, rates of female participation, etc.



Step 4. Structure the Summary

OVERVIEW (~110 words)

What is this study about and why should rural audiences care?

- ✓ Hook / particular approach (question or statement).
- ✓ What the study examined.
- ✓ Novelty and Focus.
- ✓ Rural context and broader implications.

RESEARCH RESULTS (~ 130 words)

What did the researchers find that is relevant for the rural world?

- ✓ Patterns, trends, actionable insights.
- ✓ Use bullet points summarized by a guiding term that highlights the result.
- ✓ Highlight regional differences when it is relevant.
- ✓ Remove statistical overload unless it is essential.

WHY IT MATTERS (~50 words)

Why does this matter for rural Ontario?

- Move beyond description (i.e. don't repeat/extend a list of findings) and explain:
- ✓ Implication(s) for everyday rural communities.
- ✓ Relevance for planning, governance, sustainability, etc.

Step 4. Structure the Summary. Example Sport Participation

OVERVIEW (~110 words)

What is this study about and why should rural audiences care?

Gender-based Approach

Sport involvement dynamics

Place-based programs / provincial inclusiveness

RESEARCH RESULTS (~ 130 words)

What did the researchers find that is relevant for the rural world?

✓ Female Participation (70%)

✓ Regional Participation (North-South)

✓ Rural Gap (1%)

WHY IT MATTERS (~50 words)

Why does this matter for rural Ontario?

✓ Strengthening public health and wellbeing in northern and rural regions

Step 5. Writing Strategies: The Plain Language Challenge

Finding the Tone and the Right Audience

- ✓ **Use clear, practical language:** Avoid academic debate styles, theoretical approach, and citations. Write for planners, community groups, rural residents, non-profits, small businesses, and policymakers.
- ✓ **Present findings neutrally:** Engage readers without promotional framing. Describe the research accurately and transparently, avoid superlatives (e.g., “groundbreaking,” “cutting-edge”).
- ✓ **Highlight 3-5 core takeaways:** Focus on a small set of key messages. They will later support the structuring of videos, infographics, and social media posts.
- ✓ **Make technical terms readable:** Explain or rephrase specialized language so it is legible to non-experts, without oversimplifying or diluting meaning.

“Spatial analysis methodology”:
...where and how [women and girls
participate in rowing across Ontario].

“Food systems”:
...everything involved in getting
food from the farm to your plate.

Step 6. Final Review and preparation of the layout

- Are the rural implications and relevance explicit?
- Are key findings easy to identify?
- Is academic jargon removed or clearly explained?
- Does the “Why It Matters” section go beyond summary?
- Could this text support short video script (30–50 seconds)?
- Could its key numbers or trends be transformed into an infographic?



Selecting the right image

- **Choose images intentionally:** A reflection of rural contexts and direct connection to the study’s core concepts.
- **Support the main message:** Clarify or reinforce the meaning of the research through a key image.
- **Use accessible image sources:** You may rely on open online repositories (e.g., Pixabay) to find clear, relevant visuals.
- **Search with purpose:** Use keywords and close synonyms from the summary (e.g., *rural water system, community water treatment, rural recreation, community sport*).

15 - Min Activity: Drafting a Plain Language Summary (PLS)

Objective: Identify and draft key points of a plain language summary!

1. Quick Setup



- Small Groups
- Assigning Roles
 - A: Overview**
 - B: Key Findings**
 - C: Why it Matters**

~ 2 min

2. Extraction



- Skim Article
- Find Key Points
 - **Main Idea**
 - **Key Findings**
 - **Why Important**

~ 5 min

3. Draft in Simple Words



- 2-3 Short Sentences
- Legible / Translate Jargon
- Focus on key Messages

~ 5 min

4. Share & Combine

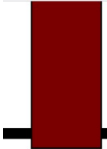


- **Share** texts
- **Build** a quick summary together
- **Suggest** key words to find illustration

~ 3 min

15 - Min Activity: Drafting a Plain Language Summary (PLS)

Choose the study you wish to summarize

 **Journal of Rural and Community Development**


Exploring the Crisis: Factors Affecting Large Animal Veterinary Services In Northern Ontario's Rural Regions

Exploring the Crisis: Factors Affecting Large Animal Veterinary Services In Northern Ontario's Rural Regions

<https://journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/article/view/2799/805>

Journal of Rural Studies 122 (2026) 103944

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

 **Journal of Rural Studies**

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud

Between illicit economies and having a dream: Exploring rural youth aspirations and life-courses in a rural municipality in Colombia

Margarita Fontecha ^a, Silvia Sarapura-Escobar, Ryan Gibson


School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph, Ontario College of Agriculture, Guelph, ON, Canada

Between illicit economies and having a dream: Exploring rural youth aspirations and life-courses in a rural municipality in Colombia

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0743016725003857>

Journal of Rural Studies 123 (2026) 104066

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

 **Journal of Rural Studies**

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud

A rural matrix: A pragmatic alternative approach to defining rural for policy and practice

Danika Hammond ^a, Sarah-Patricia Breen ^b, Ryan Gibson ^{a,*}

^a University of Guelph, Canada
^b Selkirk College, Canada

A Rural Matrix A Pragmatic Alternative approach to defining rural for policy and practice.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0743016726000689#abs0015>

Lessons Learned in Creating Research Summaries Videos



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Why Plain Language Summary Videos?

1

Reach Beyond Academia

Make research accessible to policymakers, funders, and the public

2

Increase Impact

Videos are 10x more likely to be shared than text

3

Boost Engagement

60-second videos have 60% completion rates vs 5% for longer content

4

Build Trust

Depicts research with authentic communication

The 9-Step Workflow

1



Prepare Content

2



Open Canva

3



Add Visuals

4



Add Callouts

5



Add Captions

6



Add Audio

7



Background Music

8



Review & Text

9



Export MP4

Video Structure: 55 Seconds

Slide 1

0:00–0:11

Study title only

Slide 2

0:11–0:22

What the study was about (Brief Intro)

Slide 3

0:22–0:33

1–2 key findings

Slide 4

0:33–0:44

1–2 implications

Slide 5

0:44–0:55

QR code + funder acknowledgment

Design Essentials

Visual Elements

- ✓ Use research photos first
- ✓ Reduce opacity to 40–60%
- ✓ Add 1 animated graphic/slide
- ✓ Dark background template
- ✓ Relevant imagery on every slide

Text & Audio

- ✓ Callouts: 6–12 words, amber
- ✓ Captions match voiceover
- ✓ White text on dark background
- ✓ Music: 10–15% volume
- ✓ Warm, conversational tone

Voiceover & Audio Options



Record Your Voice

Most authentic & personal

Record in Canva's studio

Quiet room recommended

Natural, conversational pace



AI Text-to-Speech

Quick & easy

Multiple voice options

Professional quality

No recording needed



Upload Pre-recorded

Record on your phone

MP3 or WAV file

Full control over timing

Edit in Canva

Final Checklist

Before You Export ✓

- Total length is approx. 55 seconds
 - Each slide is 11 seconds
 - Voiceover on key slides
- QR code tested & working
 - All text readable

Quality Check ✓

- Captions match voiceover
 - Callouts on main slide
- Images relevant & sized
- Music at 10–15% volume
- Funder is acknowledged

Typical Video Summary

Kindly watch the video, then share 2–3 keywords for image or video Elements that stood out to you.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9ZQH883nDs>



Activity

Kindly share 2–3 keywords for image or video elements that stood out to you.

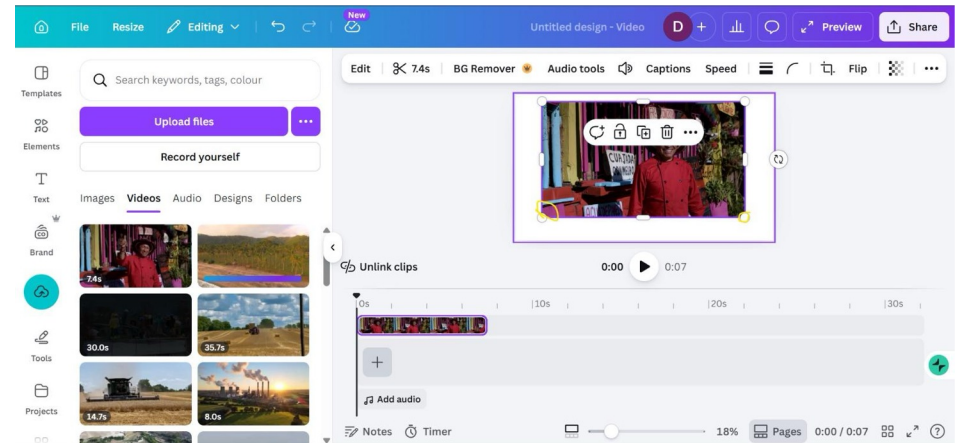
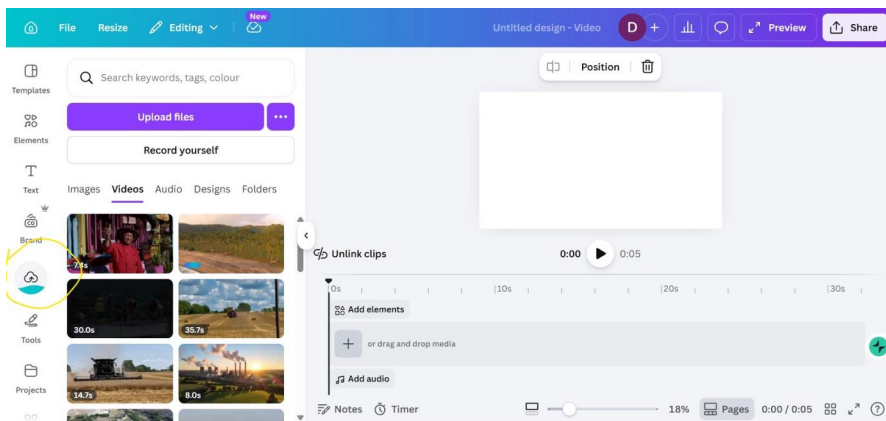


[VIEW](#)
[RESULTS](#)

Creating Video Summary: Upload Elements

How to Upload Elements

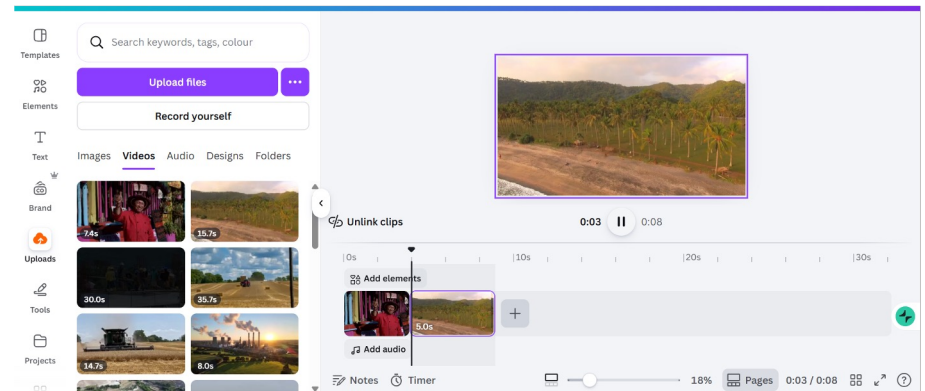
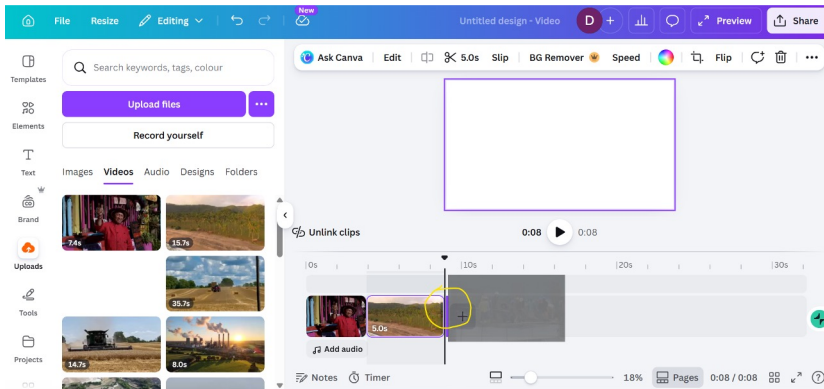
1. Open Uploads Panel: Click on the Uploads tab on the left sidebar.
2. Upload Your Video: Click Upload files and select video clips from your device.
3. Locate Your Clip: Once uploaded, your videos will appear under the **Videos** section.
4. Add Clip to Timeline: Drag and drop your selected clip into the timeline below your canvas.



Arrange and Trim

How to Sequence

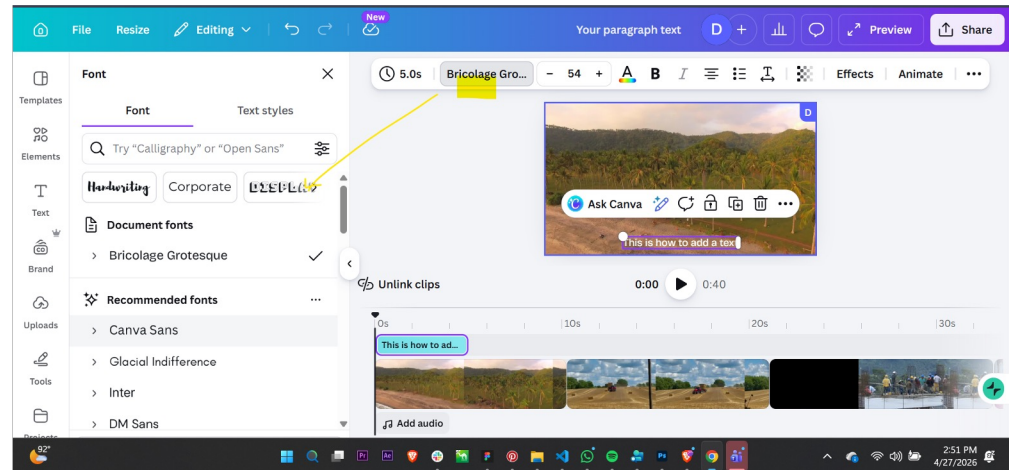
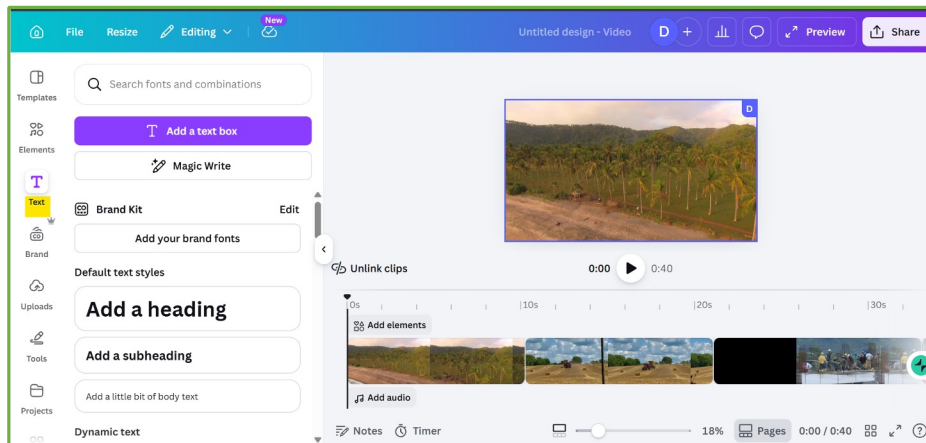
1. Arrange Clips: Drag clips left or right to reorder them in your timeline.
2. Trim or Adjust Duration: Click on a clip and drag its edges to shorten or extend it.
3. Preview Your Video: Click the Play button to review your sequence.



Adding Text and Captions

How to Add Texts and Captions

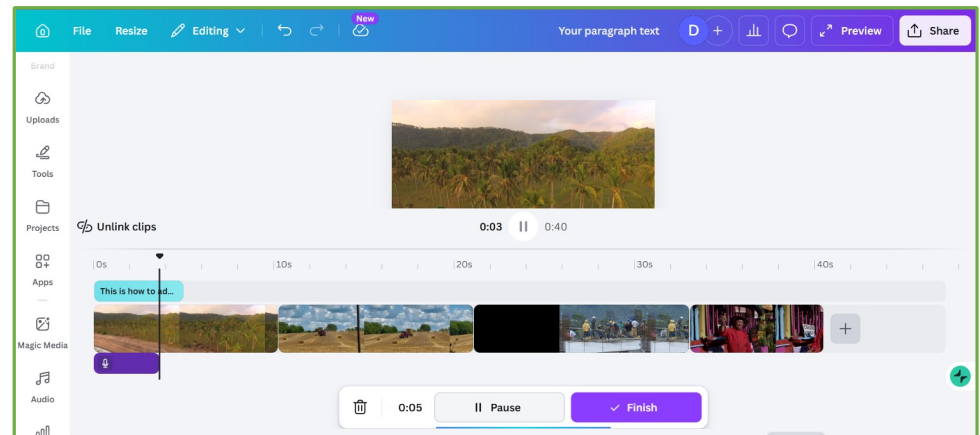
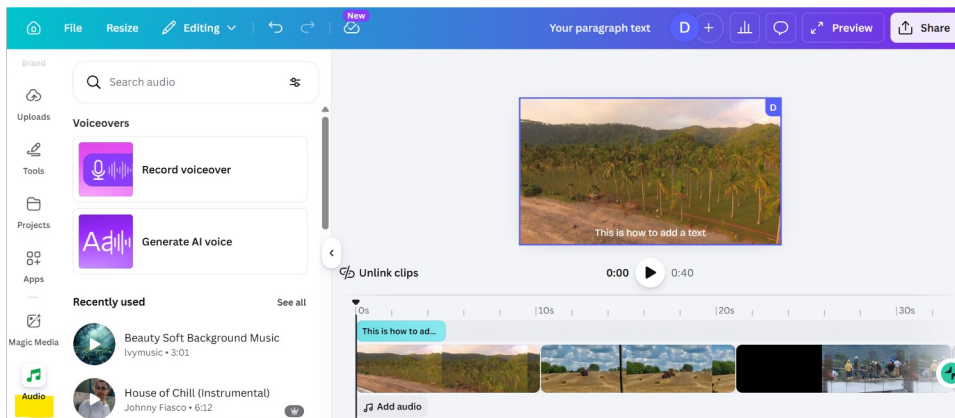
1. Click 'Text' in the left panel
2. Choose a simple, readable font (avoid decorative fonts)
3. Keep sentences short and clear
4. Position text so it doesn't cover important visuals



Adding Audio & Voiceovers

How to Add Audio and Voiceovers

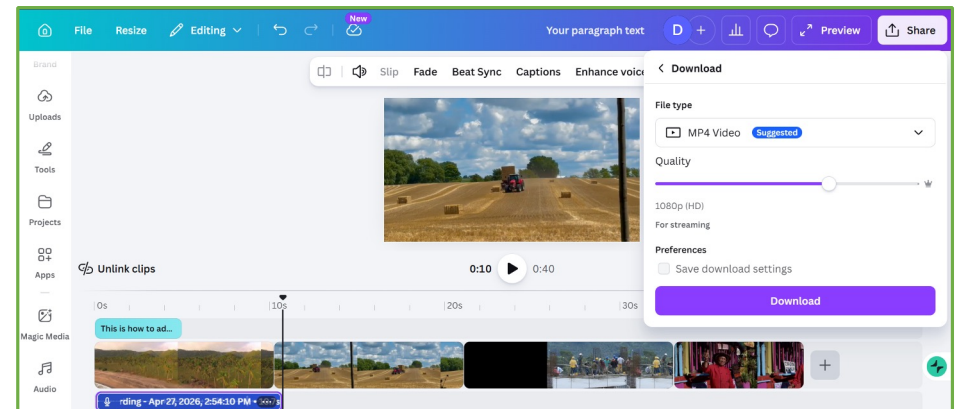
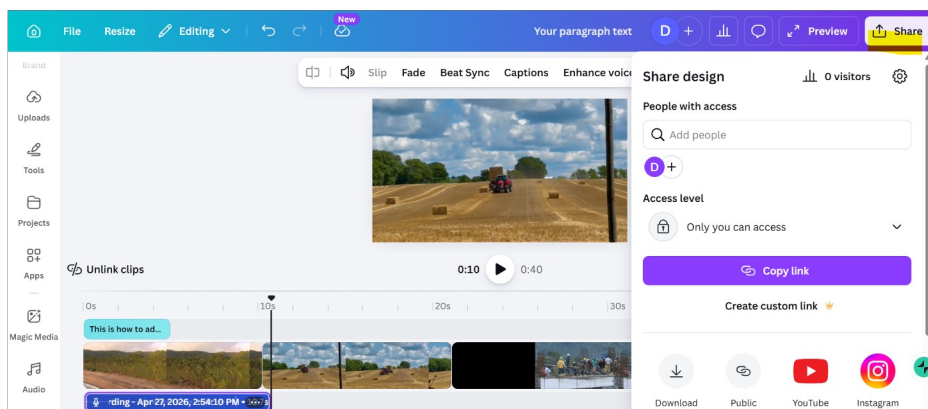
1. Click 'Audio' in the left panel to upload a file
2. Or click 'Record yourself' to add a voiceover
3. Speak slowly and clearly
4. Preview to make sure audio syncs with visuals



Exporting & Sharing the Video

How to Export and Share Video

1. Click Share (top right) → Download
2. Select MP4 Video as the file type
3. Choose the page range if needed
4. Share via email or Google Drive, or embed in a website



Lessons Learned from Knowledge Mobilization Strategies



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Mobilizing Your Plain Language Summaries

- There are two ways to share your plain language summary and video: social media messages and newsletters.
- Social media creates an opportunity for your research to be seen by a wide variety of people and draw them in to read your summary.
- Newsletters allow your summary to reach more targeted audiences.

Machine Learning Models for Prediction of Nutrient Concentrations in Surface Water in Agricultural Watershed

Can smart algorithms help protect our rivers from farm runoff? The Connecting the Dots initiative is excited to share the latest Rural Research Summary, "Machine learning models for prediction of nutrient concentrations in surface water in an agricultural watershed," providing implications and practical recommendations for farmers, policy makers, planners and community organizations, among other stakeholders. The research was conducted by Ahmed Elsayed, Sarah Rixon, Jana Levison, Andrew Binns and Pradeep Goel and published in the Journal of Environmental Management.

The research explores:

- How innovative machine learning tools, such as the Ensemble Bagged Trees Model, can effectively predict nitrate in order to protect drinking water and aquatic life.
- How the Exponential Gaussian Process Regression (GPR) model can accurately estimate nutrient concentrations, offering valuable support for water protection planning.
- How readily available data like rainfall, land use, and stream flow can be harnessed through computational models to safeguard water quality, especially in resource-limited settings. Learn more about the research through a brief one-page summary and a short video. This summary serves as a valuable resource for those interested in rural development, water resource management, and agricultural and land use planning in rural Ontario.

This summary was created through the Connecting the Dots initiative at the University of Guelph, supported by the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance.

We encourage readers to explore this article for its clear, practical take on how innovative research can support smarter water protection and rural planning decisions.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT](#)

Heather Douglas · You
Driven Planning Professional Ready to Apply Academic...
3mo · 🌐

The Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario's Farmer-Led Research Program (FLRP) is demonstrating the value of farmer-driven inquiry in agriculture.

Researchers from the University of Guelph collaborated with the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario to assess how the FLRP has supported farmers in testing innovative practices, sharing knowledge, and enhancing their communities.

Discover how this partnership is reshaping agricultural research in Ontario:
<https://lnkd.in/gKj-2XZ6>

This study was published by Erin Nelson, Sarah Hargreaves, and Dillon Muldoon in the Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development.

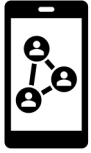
Learn more about the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario at efao.ca

hashtag

#RuralGuelph #FarmerLedResearch #AgResearch #OntarioFarming #KnowledgeMobilization

Rural Research Summary
Farmer Knowledge as Formal Knowledge in Ontario

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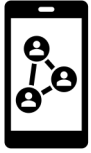
Writing Social Media Messages

Choose your Social Media Platforms

- Decide which platforms you want to share your message on (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, and X)
- Identifying which platform(s) your target audience uses will help you decide.
- Keep platforms' character limits in mind when deciding.

Draft your Message

- Create an opening statement for your message that will hook your audience.
- Discuss the key point(s) of your research summary in one to two sentences.
- Call the reader to action and link them to your summary and video.
- Create hashtags that are relevant to your post.



Writing Social Media Messages

Find a Visual Element

- You can use the video you created alongside your plain language summary.
- Alternatively, you can create an image through Canva.
- If you are creating a Canva image, make sure you include the title of your summary in it.

Adjust your Post for Each Platform

- Some platforms like X impose character limits, ensure that your post is within the limits for your chosen platform(s).
- If using an image, consider tailoring its shape and size to each platform (e.g. a squarer shape for Instagram).

Review and Post your Message

- Review your message , making sure it is clear.
- Decide when you want to post. Try and avoid busy periods like the holidays and exam season.
- Schedule your message. Some apps let you do this for free, consider using Fedica, which offers a free account.



Writing Newsletters

Choose the Organization(s) For Your Newsletter

- When deciding which organizations you will send your newsletter to consider the following factors:
 1. Geography: where is the organization? Where does your research cover?
 2. Audience: Who should be reading this?
 3. Existing Connections: have I worked with groups that would publish your newsletter?

Draft your Newsletter

- Create titles for your newsletter. Consider using different titles to increase online visibility.
- Write the body of your newsletter, it should have three key sections:
 1. Introduction: start with a hook then provide a brief overview of the research.
 2. Key points: provide a high-level overview of what the research explores
 3. Call to action: include a link to the summary and call readers to visit it.



Writing Newsletters

Review and Finalize your Newsletter

- Now that you have drafted your newsletter, review it. Ask yourself:
 1. Does it have a captivating title? Is it different for each organization
 2. Does it start with a hook to draw in the readers and discuss the key points of the research and its summary?
 3. Does it link people to the summary and video?
 4. Is it free of technical language?

Send out your Newsletter

- Once your newsletter is ready, you can send it to the organizations via email to request that they include it in their newsletters.
- When possible, send it to the communications person with the organization, you can often find their information on the organization's website.
- If you do not have prior connections with the organization, be sure to introduce yourself in the email.



Activity: Mobilizing your Summary and Video

Chose your Mobilization Method

Within your group, decide whether you would like to draft a social media message or newsletter.

If you finish drafting your chosen mobilization method early, try working on the other method.

Social Media Activity

- In your group, start drafting a social media message.
- Remember to include the key components:
 1. Opening 'hook' statement
 2. Key points of the research
 3. Call the reader to action
 4. Hashtags

For a challenge, try tailoring the message to X, making it 280 characters or less.

Newsletter Activity

- In your group, start drafting a newsletter
 - Remember to include the key components:
 1. Introduction
 2. Key points of the research
 3. Call the reader to action
- For a challenge, try coming up with different titles for your newsletter.

Questions, Connecting, and Acknowledgement

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