Presentation

As you proceed with the course, you have reached a stage when you will have to present the outcomes of your work. Whether it is a presentation in a seminar, a diploma thesis defence, or a presentation at work or in a project team, it is always important to handle the presentation well.

In this module we will focus on the presentation of information, or in other words on the creation of presentations.

At the completion of the module you should:

- be able to define the presentation structure
- be able to describe the formal and content proprieties of a presentation
- be able to use the formal elements correctly while creating a presentation

Key concepts

Presentation structure, Formal proprieties of a presentation, Content of a presentation, Creation of a presentation, Presentation tools

Contents

1 What is presentation

A presentation is a method suitable for the transfer of information; within a relatively short span of time, we can enable access to a large amount of information. One lecturer can work with a relatively large audience by themselves.

One of the disadvantages of a presentation is an insufficient space for activity on the part of the listeners. Knowledge mediated via a presentation is not memorized easily; therefore, more emphasis is put on the presenter's abilities.

Before you start creating a presentation, you should bear in mind:

- what your aim or purpose is (to present yourselves, to present a project, to defend your thesis…)
- how much time you have for your presentation (you should have at least 2 minutes for each slide; for a 20-minute-long presentation you should thus have 10 slides - see Presentation structure)
- who is in the target group (age, education, the number of participants, knowledge about the given issue…)
- what the main idea of your presentation is (project output, thesis presentation, research commentary…)
- what the main benefit for the audience is (unique information, getting acquainted with a new topic…)
- in what ways you will be distinguished from other presenters (clothes, way of speech, unusual elements in your presentation, knowledge about the topic…)
- what your presentation should bring to the listeners (topics to think about, impulses or motivation to learn more about the topic…)

2 Formal proprieties of a presentation

Pictures, photos, charts, diagrams
- use large, detailed, sharp pictures
- use pictures which are related to the text
- do not forget captions

Music and sounds
- better not use sound effects (unless music is part of the topic)
- background music is totally inappropriate

Video
- use only if it is part of the topic
- the length of the video should not exceed 3 minutes
- beware of the supported formats (wmv, asf, avi, mpeg) and the video size

Animations
- they distract the listeners and slow down the speaker; do not use too many of them
- if you use animations, choose them well so that they are natural, uniform and undisturbing
- do not use automatic timing

3 Content proprieties of a presentation

- while creating a presentation, remember the principle of **simplicity** and clarity; use words (not complex sentences);
- if there is a term you want to talk about in the headline, do not repeat it below

- avoid the so-called "unnecessary" words - particles, conjunctions, extra words
- remember the importance of a logical and **well-arranged layout of the text**
- use **variability** (the possibility of responding to additional questions or possible changes); include interesting impulses (e.g. jokes which, however, do not disturb the presentation - information is more important than appearance)
- remember that the content is limited by time; the audience must **understand** the content and **be captivated** by it - use the speech of the audience
- prepare the structure carefully; try the presentation at home (including your commentary)
- **beware of spellyng and grammatycal mystakes**
- **do not read the text on your slides**! - slides should only serve to arrange your thoughts
- **Practical advice - text layout**
- the most important text should be the last (the last point)
- the most important term should be placed as the last one, in the bottom right corner

4 Programs

Microsoft PowerPoint

The most frequent program for the presentation creation**.** It is a very common tool. If you want to improve your skills, there is a broad range of handbooks. This is why we will rather present a novelty - an application called Prezi, available for free.

Prezi (Prezi Zooming Presentation Editor)

Prezi is an alternative tool for the creation of presentations. Among the advantages of Prezi are its **creativity, ease of presentation creation and its simple use.** It is by all means worth to try; you have to create your user account for it. On this website you will find further useful information and tutorials related to this program.

Google Presentations

This tool is offered as part of the entire package of Google Documents services. It offers templates and common editing tools; it also enables you to e.g. draw your own shapes or insert videos easily. The main advantage is probably the possibility to create presentations online and share them with your colleagues. Instant Messaging also enhances cooperation; you can discuss the creation in real time. Changes are continuously saved, so you will not lose your work. It is very easy to display presentations online.

5 Summary

Before you start creating a presentation, it is important to bear in mind its **aim and purpose, the time available and the target group** for which the presentation is created. A presentation must have a structure, its content should be balanced, and it should not be disturbing as far as its formal aspects are concerned. You may also use programs freely accessible on the Internet, e.g. Prezi or Google Documents.