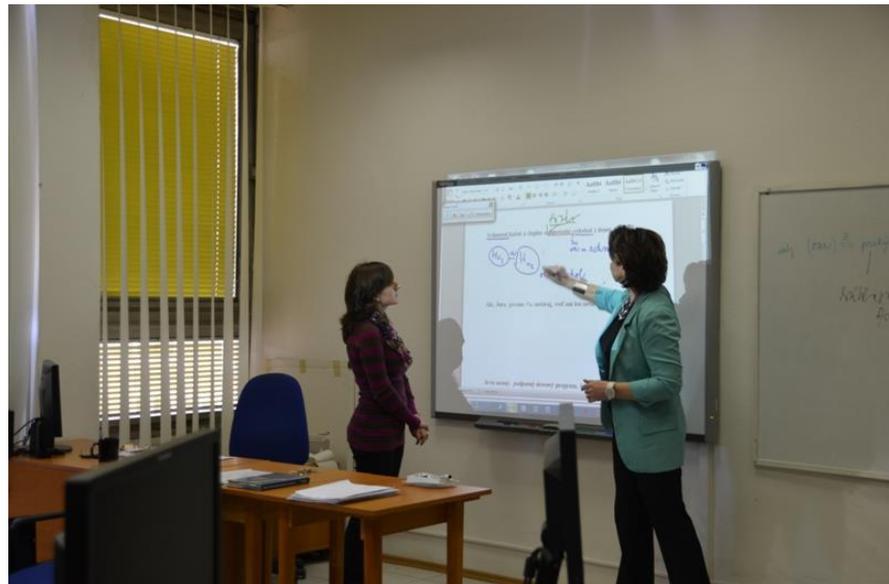


# USING TECHNOLOGY FOR PRESENTING IDEAS



## 3

*Digital competence and presentation skills are part of teacher's work*

Roman  
Čančinov

- 3.1 Technology in higher education
- 3.2 Using technology in lectures and seminars
- 3.3 Principles of appropriate use of technology

# Using technology for presenting ideas

## DIGITAL COMPETENCE AND PRESENTATION SKILLS ARE PART OF TEACHER'S WORK

### INTRODUCTION

The term 'technology' is not new, and it has been here since early 17th century originated in Greek *tekhnologia* which means 'systematic treatment or systematic application'. Today, technology generally refers to advancements in the methods and tools we use to solve problems or to achieve a goal. In the school environment, the term educational technology, which aims to improve education, started to be common. Teachers have been here for centuries and there have always been tools that should have helped students learn. Abacus, clay slates, chalk, pencils, pens, typewriters, OHP (overhead projectors), cassettes or video players and recorders were and some of them still are instructional tools used in the class. In the last few decades, the growth of new technologies have affected our lives. The new technology encompasses mobile phones, computers, laptops, tablets etc. and finally, the internet. Both teachers and students use technology in their daily lives outside the class and there is no or just little doubt that they could imagine life without them. Technologies entered our schools and have become part of a classroom. No matter which segment you teach in, using technology influenced teaching and learning in all segments of our school system, from kindergardens, primary and secondary schools to universities. *The first part of the chapter* aims to introduce using technology in higher education, to deal with competences of the teachers in higher education and approaches to using technology in their teaching practice. *The second part* deals with using various types of modern technology in lectures and seminars, such as interactive whiteboard (IWB), videos or internet. There are some tools to engage students to be a part of the lecture or seminar by using polls and surveys, and so called Audience Response System (ARS) started to be popular with some teachers. *The last, third, part of this chapter* offers some tips on how to prepare and create a good presentation, how to structure it and it offers some presentation tools for the classroom focused on PowerPoint.

Teaching with technology isn't just about staying current on the latest tools, it's about knowing how to successfully incorporate the best tools into your teaching when and where it makes sense.

### 3.1 TECHNOLOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

*Teacher in higher education is the "most important study source, which is available to most of the students," (ENQA, 2009, p. 18). The teacher is considered as a qualified professional teaching his field of study. "The work of the university teacher has a great impact on development of knowledge and cognition in each society. It is very demanding work that requires professional competences and continual enhancing professional knowledge, social competencies, and also ability to develop them, ability in scientific research what is connected also with ability to transfer the science results to students in*

such a way to understand them and were inspiring for their future development“ (Kravčáková, Lukáčová & Búgelová, 2011). Blašková and Blaško (2012, p. 41), based on their project work, offer the list of 10 competences of the university teacher:

- Moral and ethical competence
- Technical (expert) competence
- Scientific competence
- Acclaimed author’s competence
- Communication competence
- Role model competence
- Mature personality competence
- Critically thinking competence
- Excellent teaching competence
- Motivation competence

Technologies have affected the world, the world of students and the world of the teachers. Teachers in higher education have become the part of the digital world and try to accept the fact. With the development of technologies, the understanding of technical competence has changed. The term technical, now, can be included in so-called **digital competence**. Walker and White (2013, pp. 8-9) described the model of *digital competence* consisting of four elements:

- *procedural competence*: the ability to manipulate with the technology in terms of both hardware and applications. Simply, it is about knowing how to use the technology – the basic skill.
- *socio-digital competence*: the understanding of what is appropriate to use in different social contexts and knowledge domains, in terms of both technology and language.
- *digital discourse competence*: the ability to manage an extended task, possibly using several applications and / or types of equipment.
- *strategic competence*: the ability to repair problems and work around the gaps in technological knowledge and skills.

When we look at the *digital discourse competence* in more detail, we will find out this competence is closely connected with *communicative discourse competence*. Talking about the first one, we mean the ability to record, edit, and publish a video or to write a blog post with photos. The task will require a range of skills and technical knowledge. When writing the texts of these chapters, we need digital competence to edit text, make heading, to insert diagrams or pictures. At the same time we need the communicative competence to be able to structure the text, create paragraphs, and sequence and link ideas using appropriate language. For language teachers in higher education, it is very important to understand what digital competence is since it “provides a mechanism for diagnosing, understanding, and repairing the digital needs of learners“ (Walker and White, 2013, p. 9). Moreover, it is interwoven with the preparation of a successful presentation that will be dealt with later in this chapter.

### 3.1.1 Pros and cons of technologies used in higher education

When we enter a classroom, an auditorium or language laboratory today, we can see some differences or changes concerning educational technology. However, the seating arrangements, chairs and desks, left, in some cases, untouched. The typical classroom at university used to be equipped with blackboard with chalks, a lectern with microphone, OHP, cassette or video players. Today, new technology gadgets appeared in the modern classroom and a whiteboard will be probably seen instead of the traditional black or green blackboard. The latest technology equipment of the classroom at universities:

- whiteboards with environment-friendly markers
- interactive whiteboard (IWB)
- projectors
- computers
- laptops
- tablets
- video / DVD camera
- laser pointers, clickers

There is no need to have a video / DVD player, as the computers and laptops include the function of playing the clips that can be used in the class to present new ideas to students. Moreover, the internet access has become inseparable part of education. Straková (2013, p. 92) offers some *advantages of using modern technology* in teaching languages:

- high motivation of learners
- support of self-directed learning
- support of self-management
- access to internet sources
- access to enumerable mobile applications
- possible use inside as well as outside the classroom, etc.

Jean Montano (2015), an academic professional, has compiled a list of *six pros and six cons of using technology* in the classroom:

## The Pros

### 1. **Using technology in the classroom allows you to experiment more in pedagogy.**

Whether it's a dramatic change such as teaching with a flipped-classroom, or just adopting a single tool for a specific project or term, you'll learn something new in modern academia! Being well-versed in technology can also help build your credibility with students, and even with fellow colleagues.

### 2. **There are countless resources for enhancing education and making learning more fun and effective.**

From apps to organizational platforms to e-textbooks and more, there are many amazing tools that can help both students and professors collaborate, share ideas, stay organized, and more to get the most out of learning.

### 3. **Technology can automate a lot of your tedious tasks.**

There are engagement tools (Learning Management System) that can automate grading for you and keep track of student performance.

### 4. **Your class has instant access to information that can supplement their learning experience.**

It shifts the classroom experience from the sage-on-a-stage approach to a more collaborative environment.

### 5. **Students can learn life skills through technology.**

Creating presentations, learning to differentiate reliable from unreliable sources on the Internet, maintaining proper online etiquette, and writing emails.

### 6. **We live in a digital world.**

Neither you, nor your students, should go back to the 19th century when they walk into your classroom. Using technology in the classroom can prepare your students for a future deeply rooted in technology.

## The Cons

1. **Technology can be a distraction.**  
Creating expectations and guidelines for the students, and sticking to them, will be important for them in respecting your boundaries.
2. **Possible disconnect of social interaction.**  
Many people are skeptical of technology and what it does to students' ability to verbally communicate. If you create assignments in class that use both technological tools as well as oral presentations and collaboration, this will teach students to be dynamic in how they learn and interact with others.
3. **Technology can foster more cheating in class and on assignments.**  
However, this will only happen if you give up hope on adjusting your students' attitudes and only give them subjective assignments that require no thought or perspective.
4. **Students do not have equal access to technological resources.**  
It will be up to you to point them in the direction of the library or community resources, or to create assignments that allow them to work in groups and share resources.
5. **The quality of research and sources they find may not be top-notch.**  
Your students may need some guidance on identifying proper sources and unreliable sources.
6. **Lesson planning can become more labor intensive with technology.**  
Yes, for some. It can seem overwhelming to adapt technology into your classroom. In many ways though, using technology can become as natural to you as any daily activity. Allow yourself time to learn how to use something.

Prensky (2001, pp. 1 – 2) argues “*Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach.*” In his article he mentions the terms **digital natives** and **digital immigrants**. Digital natives were born in today’s digital world and are all ‘native speakers’ of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet. On the other hand, digital immigrants are those who were not born in this digital world, but they try to become, more or less, fascinated by aspects of new technology. “As Digital Immigrants learn – like all immigrants, some better than others – to adapt to their environment, they always retain, to some degree, their “accent,” that is, their foot in the past.” (Prensky, 2001, p. 2)

There are still a lot of teachers who are frightened of or feel unsure about using latest technologies in the classroom. They argue the tried and tested ways of delivering the content to their students have been successful for years. Stacey Hughes (2014) addressed some of the common fears of using technology and offers some useful tips:

1. **Start slow**  
You don’t have to use everything at once. Choose one device, tool or app to try this semester or this year.
2. **Use the technology supplied with course books, workbooks and teacher’s books**  
If you are using CDs or DVDs, you are already using technology! Experiment with any online workbooks, student or teacher websites, learning games or mobile

content. Don't be afraid to let students take the lead with some of this – students are generally happy to help the teacher with the technology side of things.

**3. Use technology that is already in the room**

Look at what you have available and then how you might use it. Be sure to include student cell phones and smartphones in your assessment. If you have a projector and internet access, for example, or you can have an online dictionary at the ready for any vocabulary or collocations that come up in class.

**4. Start with the learning aim**

This is undoubtedly the most important thing to keep in mind. Put learning first and look for the best tool to use to aid that learning.

**5. Ask yourself these questions:**

What do I want my students to do or learn?

Can technology help?

If so, which technology?

Is there something I can use that I already have or do I need to find something that I can use?

Will using this technology benefit the students? If so, how? (If not, don't use it!)

How much time will it take me to learn this and is it time well invested?

(i.e. Once I have learned it, will I use it again and again?)

Technology has the power to transform how people learn. Technology can influence students' attitude towards learning and teachers' attitude to teaching. So why not to use this advantage technology offers to all of us.

## 3.2 USING TECHNOLOGY IN LECTURES AND SEMINARS

### 3.2.1 New formats of teaching in higher education

In recent years modern technology has challenged the most widespread formats of delivering information and knowledge to students in higher education: lectures and seminars. In continuing and higher education, a *lecture* is understood as a structured talk on a given subject delivered every week for a larger group of students. The aim of the lecture to provide an introduction to a subject which can be expanded through reading, class discussion and essay writing. The *seminar* is, on the other hand, a teaching session for smaller groups and may include mini-lectures, group discussions, analyses of visual and aural materials, exercises, student presentations and other activities. Seminars provide students with an opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of their subject and to practise a variety of academic skills.

Modern technologies have influenced both formats, lectures and seminars, and helped make them more interactive. Besides a traditional lecture with personal presence of students, there are new digital tech-tools, web conferencing, webcasting and screencasting, which are taking a lecture to a new level.

- *web conferencing* allows students to collaborate regardless of their location. The popular tools are Blackboard Collaborate, Adobe Connect, or Google Hangouts.
- *webcasting* allows lecturers to stream live sessions which can be recorded and is ideal for distance learning. It also has benefits for making taster lectures available to potential future students.
- *screencasting*, the digital recording of a computer screen output, allows content to be shared over the internet. Lecturers can pre-record chunks of material to blend with other interactive approaches.

The tech-tools mentioned above can be used in today's competitive world to make teaching more attractive and effective for teachers and students and it is up to the lecturer whether s/he decides to use some of the tools. However, there are more educational tools close at hand met by teachers and students almost every day including: interactive whiteboard, videos, internet or tablets.

### 3.2.2 Using interactive whiteboards in higher education

Universities want to innovate classrooms and auditoriums and equip them with the latest technology used for educational purposes. Interactive whiteboard (IWB) is one of such tools and is an excellent tool now widely used in higher education. It is a whiteboard connected to a computer and a projector and displays a computer desktop. Each interactive whiteboard has its own software which varies a little from board to board. Cimermanová (2011, p. 54) states a few functions most whiteboards share:

- *a set of tools for text editing* – to write, change colour, font, insert shapes and pictures, etc.
- *screen shade (hide and reveal)* – efficient and practical for presentation and guessing activities when you need to cover and uncover the part of the text or a picture.
- *spotlighting* – a black screen with a small point visible on the board that can be moved but also increased and decreased.
- *drag and drop* – activities used in both printed and electronic forms where you can create text or pictures, select them and drag and drop them anywhere on the screen.

The software that can be installed in the interactive whiteboard is produced by most publishers who develop versions of popular coursebooks and make working with the whiteboard easy. The software, e.g. *iTools*, offers ready-made materials, games, audio and video materials, interactive activities and all components of a course can be found in one place.

In general, IWBs enable us to use multiple media from one place. Walker and White (2013, p. 144) state the possibilities of using interactive whiteboard and mention *advantages* for teachers who use interactive whiteboard:

- IWBs allow teachers to display visual, audio and video material on a screen
- IWBs react to a pen or to touch in the same way that a mouse work on computer
- Teachers can prepare material in advance, using access to the internet to import images or other web material
- Teachers can display the results of students votes in graphic form
- The pages created in class can be saved and printed out and given or sent to students

Although the IWB contains the word interactive, there are critics who argue the IWB is not interactive enough and students just look at the screen in audience mode. Depending on the type of your presentation, either in lecture or seminar, the teacher can try to integrate IWB into the lesson. Lewis (2009, pp. 35-36) suggests some options for using the board in an interactive way:

- Use the board to *give instructions and provide examples*. Rather than handing out directions or writing steps on the board, use the whiteboard to go over the steps with the entire class. In doing so you can link each step to a concrete example of the product or invite students to the board to demonstrate the process.
- *Brainstorm* with the entire class.
- Have the class complete a project on individual computers or laptops and *display their results* via the whiteboard to the entire class.
- *Invite students to the front* and allow them to write on the board, creating a text or annotating their colleagues' work.
- *Invite groups of students* to the board to solve the problem.

As you can see, there are a lot of advantages and ways of using the interactive whiteboards in higher education, and what is more, they are multi-sensory and support all four learning styles (VARK): visual, aural, reading/writing and even kinesthetic. By handing the interactive pen over to the students, the power of IWB is uncovered.

### 3.2.3 Using video in higher education

Video recorders are not new. Teachers have been using video materials for years. Everybody knows the video tapes or more modern DVDs. There is no need to bother the teachers with advantages of using a video in lectures or seminars. Except for using it with interactive whiteboards or internet as these were not part of everyday teaching 15 years ago.

Besides ready-made video materials, there are also **authentic materials** available online. A lot of channels of communication, which used to be associated mostly with the written word, now are being replaced by video. People from various jobs, journalists, scientists, business people, educators or teacher trainers often choose or are asked to present their ideas in front of the cameras. The talks at important conferences from all over the world are recorded and shared online. There are a lot of online videos where different people share different ideas and stories. The two very good sources are TED and BIG THINK.

TED.com

- Do schools kill creativity? (Ken Robinson)
- Let's use video to reinvent education (Salman Khan)
- Don't insist on English! (Patricia Ryan)

BIGTHINK.com

- How not to spend your whole day on Facebook (Charles Duhigg)
- Technology is harming our relationships, but we can stop it (Sherry Turkle)
- How digitization can reform education (Jim Hagemann Snabe)

Playing online video to your students has more *benefits* and can motivate students, help them develop the language and language skills. The students are provided with the content that can be informative, educational or entertaining, and the videos can serve as a model for students' own work. Working with video does not finish with playing the video to students, the teachers can work with the texts that are associated with the video.

Jamie Keddie (2014, pp. 76-77), in his book *Bringing online video into the classroom*, divides video texts into *two categories*: explicit and implicit.

- *explicit texts* – the spoken texts we hear in the video: monologues, dialogues, song lyrics, presentations, or written texts: titles and subtitles. They provide students with material for listening and reading.
- *Implicit texts* – come from the teacher or students response to the video: descriptions, questions, predictions, analyses or criticism. The texts are created by students or teachers and can practise language and skills, including presentation skills.

Moreover, good presenters, including teachers and lecturers, who want to attract an audience and present the information clearly and effectively, must be good at presentation skills. These skills start to be more important than ever before. It would be useful to ask your students to focus on content and presentation skills of the presenters at the same time and that these features are worth noticing:

- Eye-contact, gestures, facial expressions, body position, arms, hands
- pace of speech, intonation, use of silence, language
- key message/s of the talk

We will look at presentation skills in more details in the last part of this chapter as they belong to the main skills students, future teachers and teachers are expected to be good at.

### 3.2.4 Using internet in higher education

University students are keen users of internet, especially when it makes their lives easier, either at home or at school. They are driving the universities to implement more and more technology including internet access in the class, in lectures and seminars, and in the library. And the universities are aware of the fact and they follow the needs of the students to meet their interests. Internet is not just fun. Lewis (2009, p. 45) summarizes a few *advantages* that come to mind:

The internet

- provides authentic content in target language
- offers meaningful language
- promotes critical thinking skills and ‘constructivist’ learning (students make choices and ‘construct’ knowledge every time they go online)
- reduces focus on the teacher and shifts it to a student
- can increase motivation

Undoubtedly, internet shapes today’s teaching and learning in higher education. No matter where you use it or want to implement it, in lecture or seminar, the use of the internet is always beneficial for both sides: students and teachers. So, whether you are teaching students how to blog, how to improve their latest presentation or want them to prepare their own online quiz, internet is a powerful tool that might make your teaching engaging. Jessica Sanders (2015), in her blog, came up with several suggestions for ways of using internet in and outside the class. These are some of them:

- Travel the world with Google Earth ([www.earth.google.com](http://www.earth.google.com))  
With this free online program your students immerse in the culture of another city, state or country.
- Invite Guest Speakers with Skype ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com))  
This tool, designed for connecting people face to face from far away, is a versatile classroom tool. Use it to connect with other students or host guest lecturer to make your lecture or seminar more interesting for students.
- Improve collaboration with Google Docs ([www.docs.google.com](http://www.docs.google.com))  
Google Docs is free to use and allows your students to collaborate in real-time. Multiple students can be editing one document together, allowing them to work collaboratively on a paper or project. You can be in the document as well, adding comments and suggestions as they go.
- Teach 21st century writing with blog platforms ([www.edublogs.com](http://www.edublogs.com))  
Blogging teaches students about writing in the digital age. Let them submit homework and projects as a blog post. Encourage them to play with the formatting, add image and videos, and share their work with friends or family.

For more suggestions see *11 Smart Ways to Use the Internet in Your Teaching* in References and Bibliography section.

Or click on the first picture on the left to get to the website directly.



### 3.2.5 Using polls and surveys in higher education

One of the ways of engaging the students to participate in the discussion actively is using polls and surveys in lectures and seminars. They support solving problems, asking questions, or making decisions. Both methods, polls and surveys, try to get the information or gather feedback from the audience (e.g. students) by asking them questions. However, there are some differences between the two forms of collecting information, so when you decide to carry out a poll or a survey questionnaire, read the distinguishing features of each method and choose which best suits your needs in lecture or seminar:

#### *Polls*

- one multiple question where students usually selects one or more answers
- gather opinion on a single topic or item and no personal or sensitive information is asked, often an anonymous form of feedback
- you can get the instant feedback in a couple of mouse clicks
- results can be seen in report immediately and no analysis is required, they provide just limited data to draw conclusions from

## Surveys

- a number of questions across wide range of question types, such as multiple choice, ratings, short and long text, ranking questions
- gather opinions on multiple topics and can help to determine future actions of the surveyor, you can be asked for your personal information such as email address, age, occupation or name
- take longer to answer and more commitment from the respondents is required to complete in full
- require more time to gather answers and analysis is need to formulate a comprehensive conclusion. You will get a much richer data results to give you a clearer picture of audience opinion

(source: obsurvey.com)

Which method would you choose? Poll (P) or Survey (S)?

You need immediate feedback.	_____
You have no time for analysis.	_____
You want to ask open questions.	_____
You have one question to ask.	_____
You will be acting upon the results of your feedback.	_____
You have a number of questions to ask.	_____

You will find the answers here:

<http://obsurvey.com/blog/the-difference-between-polls-and-survey-questionnaires/>

Many teachers agree that using authentic and personalised materials improves motivation. Lewis (2009, p. 56) states “using polls and surveys has the added benefit of developing analytical thought and the language used to do the following“:

- compare and contrast
- analyse
- summarize
- evaluate

There are two types of polls and surveys: *existing* and *your own surveys*. Students can find a survey on any topic by searching the words of their interest e.g. ‘using computers’ and the word ‘survey’. Then they can use the existing polls and surveys to analyse the data needed. To get acquainted with creating your own polls and surveys on any subject, try websites that help you to do so. It is worth trying some of these, some are free, some are partly free, partly paid:

- [www.misterpoll.com](http://www.misterpoll.com) – you can make your own poll on any subject with an unlimited number of questions and share them with friends, submit them to the public directory or get your own message forum.
- [www.poll daddy.com](http://www.poll daddy.com) – you can create stunning polls, surveys, quizzes and ratings and collect responses via your website, e-mail or on your iPad or iPhone. With Polldaddy you can choose from 14 question types, watch your result in real time,

create filters to analyze your data, customize the look of your surveys, e-mail the survey link to your students and colleagues.

- [www.polleverywhere.com](http://www.polleverywhere.com) – lets you engage your students in real time, during your lecture or seminar. You ask your students a question, with the Poll Everywhere application, the students answer in real time using their mobile or tablet and you can see the results of your poll on a web or in a PowerPoint presentation.
- [www.freeonlinesurveys.com](http://www.freeonlinesurveys.com) – you can build your own online surveys, polls, quizzes and forms.
- [www.sendsteps.com](http://www.sendsteps.com) – you can use Sendsteps to vote and ask questions during your interactive presentation. Participate using a laptop, tablet or smart phone via a website, Twitter or SMS. Sendsteps is the only PowerPoint add-in that supports real-time interaction between the audience and speaker via laptops, tablets and smartphones. The Sendsteps audience response system is used worldwide in thousands of presentations every year. It offers a free download of PowerPoint add-in and free use up to 20 students in your lecture and seminar.
- [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) – is one of the most popular online tools used for creating your own surveys in just few steps. It is used in all fields of study including education, schools, academic environment. Whether you need to understand the factors that shape faculty satisfaction, or feedback from students on a new course offering, an online survey can reveal data that will improve programs, processes, and overall achievement. Parents, students, teachers, professors, and administrators can all benefit from professional education surveys.

### 3.2.6 Audience Response System

No matter which of the websites mentioned above you want to look at and try to create your own poll or survey questionnaire, they should bring a new feature to make your seminar or lecture more challenging and engaging for your students. Some of the companies such as Poll Everywhere, Audience Response Systems, Inc., Sendsteps or Socrative offer a relatively new system, called **Audience Response System (ARS)**, which enables your students to vote on topics and answer questions posed by the lecturer or teacher. Kay and LeSage (2009, p. 819) state “Audience response systems (ARSs) permit students to answer electronically displayed multiple choice questions using a *remote control device*. All responses are instantly presented, in chart form, then reviewed and discussed by the instructor and the class.” In their article *Examining the benefits and challenges of using audience response systems: A review of the literature* they summarize the key benefits for using ARSs including improvements to the following:

- classroom environment (increases in attendance, attention levels, participation and engagement)
- learning (interaction, discussion, quality of learning and learning performance)
- assessment (feedback, formative, normative)

Bayley (2015), in his video, introduces ARS in general, speaks about why it can be useful and about some useful tips on how to use the tips. Here are the benefits he mentions in his video:

- motivation / attention
- instant feedback

- makes good use of mobile technology
- capture more detailed information (than using hands!)
- low or no-cost

There are also some *challenges for teachers* who want to start using ARS in lectures or seminars. Time they need to learn and set up the technology needed, effective questions that have to be prepared, lecture content that has to be covered and ability to respond to student feedback are the challenges the teachers have to face.

### 3.3 PRINCIPLES OF APPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

#### 3.3.1 A brief guide to the process of creating an effective presentation

Presenting information effectively and clearly is an important skill to get your message across to a target group. Whether you are a university teacher, a student or a doctoral student, you may be asked to make a presentation to present your ideas to your classmates, teachers, colleagues, or simply to an audience.

Speaking and presentation skills are useful in many areas of our life and work. Effective presentations are important in business, training, teaching and lecturing. Bill Mascull (2002, p. 126) gives some examples of different presentations:

- **press conference** (a meeting at which somebody talks to a group of journalists in order to answer their questions or to make an official statement)
- **briefing** (a meeting in which people are given instructions or information)
- **demonstration** (an act of showing or explaining how something works or is done)
- **lecture** (a talk that is given to a group of people to teach them about a particular subject, often as part of a university or college course)
- **seminar** (a class at a university or college when a small group of students and a teacher discuss or study a particular topic)
- **workshop** (a discussion and practical work on a particular subject, in which a group of people share their knowledge and experience)

As you can see, there are more types of presentations, still, they have something in common – all of them want to communicate information or a message to an audience. Anybody can give a good presentation, however, it all requires lots of preparation and practice. In this chapter we will look at some tips on how to prepare a good presentation to be prepared to stand up in front of your students or teachers and be successful.

#### **Preparing and creating your presentation**

Preparation is the most important part of making a successful presentation, therefore, you should dedicate as much time to it as possible. It will not only show to your students that you have thought carefully about what you wanted to communicate them, but it will also help boost your confidence and professionalism. Before you start dealing with putting your ideas on slides in PowerPoint, try to think of the following issues:

- **objective** – What is the goal / purpose / message of your presentation? What outcomes do I expect from my students?
- **audience** - this is usually not a problem for teachers as they know the groups they teach, however, when teaching instead of your colleague or to a new group, try to find out more about your students (size of the group, syllabus, what they need to know ...)
- **venue** – it is important to have as much information as possible about the place where you are going to present (size, seating arrangements, availability of equipment, computer with software you want to use, internet access, etc.)
- **time** – unfortunately, it is often not possible to choose time you want to give a lecture to your students, still, it is good to know students react in a different way at different times of a day (morning, afternoon, evening or weekend lessons)
- **length of the talk** – it is important to remember that 45 or 90 minute-lecture includes greeting your students and asking and answering questions of the students either during or at the end of the presentation. For these reasons, do not prepare your presentation for 45 or 90 minutes as the final part (closing) is very important for your students.

The process of creating your presentation does not start with using PowerPoint slides. At first, try to identify the **goal** to yourself and in your mind, try to gather all possible ideas that develop or support your purpose. **Brainstorming** and **mind-mapping** are methods that might help put the ideas together as they involve putting random ideas and thoughts on a piece of paper (the bigger the paper the better). Colour - coding will help too, you choose. Now, when you have all your ideas on paper, try to put them in groups – **organizing your ideas** will help you prepare the slides. Choose the ideas that you really want to include in your presentation and create a rough structure from your list.

As you defined the goal of your presentation, you have now a better idea of what you are going to present. Break down your goal into about two or three **key messages** which will often provide you with a ready-made structure of your presentation.

### Goal

Helping students produce a good presentation

### Key messages

1. Before you start dealing with slides
2. Practical tips for successful presentations
3. Useful phrases and vocabulary when presenting in English

## Structuring your presentation

There are many ideas and tips on how to prepare and structure best your presentation. In the video course **Successful presentations**, Hughes and Mallett (2012, pp. 52-53) offer following key points to remember:

- Keep it simple. The audience needs to understand each stage of a presentation or they will stop listening.
- Repeat your main messages so that the audience remembers them when they leave.
- Guide the audience during the presentation as if you are taking them on a journey.

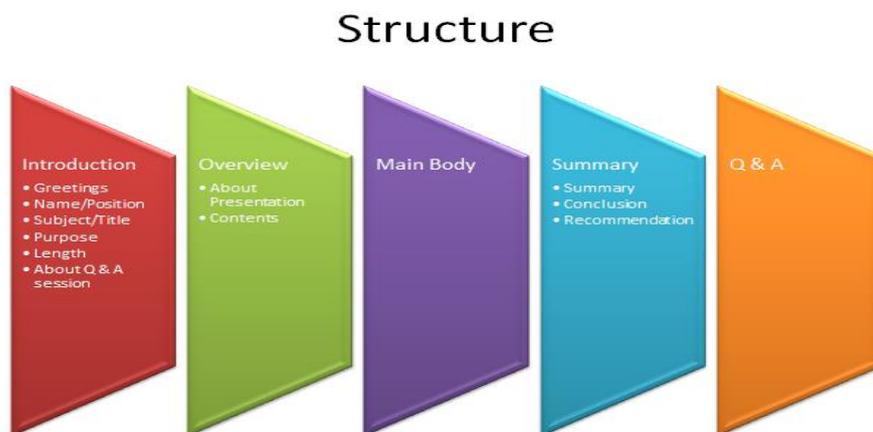


Figure 3.1 Structure of the presentation. (<http://expertpresenter.blogspot.sk/p/presentation-structure.html>)

The website *The Expert Presenter* offers a professional structure of a presentation. It consists of 5 main parts:

1. Introduction (greetings, name, subject and purpose, length, time for Q&A – during or after presentation)
2. Overview (about the presentation, contents)
3. Main Body (with key messages)
4. Summary (conclusion, recommendation)
5. Questions and Answers

In the introduction you tell the audience what you are going to talk about and provide a summary of your main messages. In the main body, you speak about each of the key messages in detail, please, stick to the structure of the presentation and make sure that you only deal with one message in each section of the main body. At the end of your presentation, you tell your audience what you have presented and summarize the key messages again. To sum up the ideas above:

- *Tell them what you're going to tell them*
- *Tell them*
- *Tell them what you have told them*

Most of the great books that will help you make better presentations are *not* specifically about presentations at all, and they are *not* about how to use slideware. The Heath brothers – Chip and Dan – were interested in what makes some ideas effective and memorable and others utterly forgettable. In their book *Made to Stick* they explain simply and brilliantly that ‘sticky’ ideas have six key principles in common: *simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotions, and stories*. Chip and Dan Heath (in: Reynolds, 2012, pp. 79-81) summarize the principles that you should keep in mind when crystallizing your ideas and crafting your message for speeches, presentations, or any other form of communication. Here are the ideas that make your messages sticky:

- **Simplicity.** If everything is important, then nothing is important. If everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority. You must be ruthless in your efforts to simplify—not dumb down—your message to its absolute core. We’re not talking about stupid sound bites here. Every idea can be reduced to its essential meaning if you work hard enough. For your presentation, what’s the key point? What’s the core? Why does (or should) it matter?
- **Unexpectedness.** You can get people’s interest by violating their expectations. Surprise people. Surprise will get their interest. But to sustain their interest, you have to stimulate their curiosity. The best way to do that is to pose questions or open holes in people’s knowledge and then fill those holes. Make the audience aware that they have a gap in their knowledge and then fill that gap with the answers to the puzzle (or guide them to the answers). Take people on a journey.
- **Concreteness.** Use natural speech and give real examples with real things, not abstractions. Speak of concrete images, not of vague notions. Proverbs are good, say the Heath brothers, at reducing abstract concepts to concrete, simple, but powerful (and memorable) language.
- **Credibility.** If you are famous in your field, you may have built-in credibility (but even that does not go as far as it used to). Most of us, however, do not have that kind of credibility, so we reach for numbers and cold, hard data to support our claims as market leaders and so on. There are many ways to establish credibility—a quote from a client or the press may help, for example.
- **Emotions.** People are emotional beings. It is not enough to take people through a laundry list of talking points and information on your slides; you must make them feel something. There are a million ways to help people feel something about your content. Images are one way to have audiences not only understand your point better but also have a more visceral and emotional connection to your idea.
- **Stories.** We tell stories all day long. It’s how humans have always communicated. We tell stories with our words and even with our art and music. We express ourselves through the stories we share. We teach, we learn, and we grow through stories. Stories get our attention and are easier to remember than lists of rules. People are attracted to “story”. Great ideas and presentations have an element of story to them.

## Presentation tools for the classroom

There are a lot of presentation tools that can be used for the classroom and are being used by both teachers and students. Here you can find something new you can use in your lecture or seminar when you want to engage your students with something a little bit different. Not only can tools like these offer a fun approach to presenting educational content, they can also be used by students for assignments and creating their own digital content. In her blog, Kelly Walsh (2011) offers 8 Great Free Digital Presentation Tools For Teachers: (click on the [blue name](#) of the tool to get there)

- [SlideShare](#): A very popular tool for sharing Powerpoint presentations and more, online, or embed them in your blog or website.
- [ZohoShow](#): Kind of similar to Powerpoint, but free, and online.
- [Glogster](#): This link will take you right to Glogster's Basic (free) plan for Educators.
- [Fotobabble](#): Create talking photos with Fotobabble! It is a simple tool for adding voice over to pictures.
- [Prezi](#): With Prezi, you create graphical presentations that you can easily zoom in and out of, to "get the big picture", or "drill into the details".
- [Voki](#): The idea behind Voki is to use a talking avatar to make your presentation.
- [Vuvox](#): I had a lot of fun creating this music video with the help of Vuvox last year, and selected it as the first app we covered in the workshop. You can add text, pics, and embedded "hot links", over a bed of music, to make your scrolling presentation.
- [OneTrueMedia](#): We took this one for a try this week – definitely easier to use than Vuvox

However, **PowerPoint** has been here for years and still belongs to the most used and favourite tools, as it is an excellent tool for teachers and students that allows them to create professional – looking presentations. PowerPoint slides might include pictures, animations, videos, sound and can be linked internally and to other outside resources. There are various PowerPoint activities for students that promote oral and written language, to support a verbal presentation or to use slides as 'pages in the book.'

As Lewis (2009, p. 29) states "PowerPoint presentations are an equally useful presentation tool for you, the teacher. With PowerPoint you can introduce key concepts to your class, integrating words, pictures, and sound to give them a rich multimedia experience that supports (scaffolds) their understanding. This is very helpful if you have a large or mixed-ability class (or audience)."

Every presentation can be supported by common options that might be used by a presenter. Think of interesting ways how to convey and bring your ideas to life and make your presentation as interesting and memorable as possible. A presentation does not only mean spoken or written words, to keep your audience engaged, you can use something like this:

- PowerPoint slides
- Posters and books
- Handouts
- Sound and video

- Interactive Whiteboard (IWB)

Whether you are an experienced teacher - speaker or not, slides help you support your ideas and presenters find them important and helpful. However, creating and writing your slides should be the tail end of developing your presentation. It is often seen that slides are used more like a presenter's notes and we should avoid it as being a good presenter does not mean to be a good reader. There are a lot of rules and practical tips on how to make slides that communicate your messages and the following ones could help you:

- **Fonts:** try to use no more than two different fonts and no more than two size / **bold** / *italic* / underline variants as the text on the slides starts to be very confused and distracting to read quickly and easily.
- **Upper-case letters** (capital letters): people need to be able to read wordshapes as well as letters and upper case makes every word a rectangle, therefore, avoid using upper case in the texts on slides a lot. It becomes uncomfortable and exhausting for your audience. Upper case can be accepted for short titles and headings, but even for heading lower-case lettering is best, with the exception of starting a sentence with a capital letter.
- **Rule 5x5:** The most common general mistake in slide design is to try to include too much text. The slide needs to communicate immediately, not after reading long sentences. Use up to 5 bullet points per slide and up to 5 words per bullet point. There are also other similar rules to 5x5 rule: 6x6 or 7x7. No matter which rule you use, just be aware of the fact that too much text on slide can be distracting. Of course, in some cases, keeping to the Rule of 5 might be impossible: too complex content, citations or when a long definition must be read and will be explained by a lecturer. When you feel it, just **break the rule of 5**.
- **Visual aids:** '*Picture is worth a thousand words*' definitely works with the presentations. Hughes and Mallet (2012, p. 55) state "Often a picture can communicate more effectively than words. If you present complicated information involving facts or figures, then you can use a graph or a diagram. Try to make them as simple as possible and only include information that really matters." So get visual aids working fully for you, and in your presentations it will be more engaging for your audience and a lot easier for you to deliver a message and enjoy the presentation.
- **Colour on your slides:** It is recommended to use white or light background with dark letters as it is more pleasant and legible for readers. On slides you can use colours, but too many colours can disturb the whole slide. So be careful with the range of colours on your slides.
- **Animations:** Animations are a helpful way to make your presentation slides look more dynamic. They are also a great way to hide and reveal bullet points, texts or objects on the slide when we do not want to reveal a secret of what is going to come, or we do not want our audience to read the content in advance. You can reveal the content one-by-one on the slide with each click, but the fact remains that if in doubt, avoid animations.
- **KISS:** Originally the KISS principle – Keep it simple, stupid – was noted by the U.S. Navy in 1960. Wikipedia describes KISS: "The KISS principle states that most

systems work best if they are kept simple rather than made complicated; therefore simplicity should be a key goal in design and unnecessary complexity should be avoided.“ When talking about presentations, KISS means *Keep it sweet and simple* or *Keep it short and simple*. The best teachers are able to explain things in a way that their students will understand. Keep your presentation simple – less is more.

English is an international language and is used as an official language at conferences, online webinars or courses, and at universities, as well. Some presenters are afraid of speaking English in front of the audience, because they do not have enough experience with so-called **signpost language**. BBC website ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)) defines the signpost language as “the words and phrases that people use to tell the listener what has just happened, and what is going to happen next. In other words, signpost language guides the listener through the presentation. Signpost language is usually less formal, so it is relatively easy to understand.“ Good presenters always use the ‘signposts’, because for the audience they make it easier to follow the structure of the presentation, to understand the speaker more easily and to get an idea of the length and content of the presentation.

*When you are making a presentation, you are presenting a package: you and your message. The more you are aware of the impact of every element, the more effective the package will be as a whole.*

([www.skillsyouneed.com](http://www.skillsyouneed.com))

## CONCLUSION

Technology started to be implemented in all segments of our school system, including higher education. Technical competence of the university teacher has changed and developed into so-called digital competence. The increase of using technology at our schools has both advantages and disadvantages, as we were born as digital immigrants, but the situation is changing slowly but surely. That is why, we offered some useful tips on how to avoid being afraid of using technology with our students. Modern equipment of our classrooms and auditoriums makes us use more and more technology tools: interactive whiteboard with useful educational software, ready-made or authentic video materials, or simply the internet. All of them shape today’s teaching and learning in higher education. We want our students to be active during lectures and seminars, we want to engage them in solving the problem or we want to know their opinion. Polls and surveys are good way to do so. There are a lot of websites that might be helpful if this idea attracted you. Teachers present their ideas, information, messages, their knowledge. Presentation and communication skills are the ones the students need to succeed in school and work. Therefore, some useful tips on how to prepare, create and structure your presentation were provided to you, whether a teacher or a student. Good luck!

## QUESTIONS

1. Name some advantages and disadvantages of using technology in the classroom. Could you suggest a solution for turning disadvantages into advantages? Come up with some ideas.
2. What would you recommend to the ‘digital immigrants’ who tend to be afraid of using technology in front of the students – ‘digital natives’.

3. What are basic functions of any interactive whiteboard, no matter what software you are using? How can you use the functions in your class?
4. Explain the difference between explicit and implicit video texts. Which of them supports presentation skills?
5. Internet can be found everywhere – at school, at home, in devices (pc, tablet, mobiles). What are the possible advantages of using the internet in class and outside the class?
6. How could you implement polls and surveys in lectures and seminars to engage your students?
7. Provide us with some ideas of what to do before we start putting our ideas on slides.
8. Introduce a sample structure of an average presentation and give some examples of content in each part.
9. Think of some ideas and tips that might make your presentation sticky or more attractive for your audience.
10. Comment on the following rules for making your slides more effective: *fonts, capital letters, 5x5 rule, visual aids, colours, animations, KISS*.

## RECOMMENDED READING

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