**Pre-class Reading: How to plan a presentation**

1. **How to plan a presentation**

Eight key steps to planning a presentation:

1. Choose a topic

Think about the following questions before you decide on the topic of your presentation.

* What are the topics covered by the conference I am going to attend?
* What topic is close to what I’m researching now?
* What’s the research frontier in this field?
* What have others done in this field?

1. Analyze the audience

You may want to find out the age, gender, background, expertise, language, etc. of the audience, as you will need this information when you compose your presentation. If you are going to a conference, you may obtain this information from the conference organizer.

Based on the audience information you have collected, try to answer the following questions:

* What has my audience known about this topic?
* What does my audience want to know about this topic / expect to get from me?
* How does the audience feel about this topic? (esp. a controversial topic)
* What presentation style can the audience best relate to? (informative OR persuasive OR entertaining?)

1. Limit your topic

There is always much to talk about a certain topic, but you need to design your talk based on the following considerations:

* How much time do I have to make this presentation?
* What aspect of the topic best suits the need and interests of the audience?
* What aspect of the topic am I competent?
* Do I have the resources and time to develop the topic?

1. Identify key points

After you have decided on your topic, you need to identify a few key points to be included in your presentation. You can follow these steps:

* List all the important ideas you want to convey in this topic.
* Identify **three to five** main points as the kernel parts of the presentation. (**3 is the best.**)
* List as many as possible the facts, statistics, statements that could support each point.

1. Organize the materials in a logical way

The following are all possible ways to organize your materials. You can choose either one to make your ideas logical.

* Chronological order
* Spatial order
* Topical order
* Order of importance
* Classification
* Cause-effect
* Problem-solution
* Comparison/contrast

Examples of these organizations are provided in the file named “pre-class reading – organizing materials”.

1. Write the outline/speech

You may choose to work out an outline or write the full script for your speech. (Details about what to include in a presentation are provided in lecture 14.)

In case you want to write the full speech script, the average speaking rate for effective presentations is about **100 English words per minute**.

1. Create slides

Lecture 15 has more on how to create slides. For now, just keep in mind: make your slides as simple as possible.

1. Practice

We all say, practice makes perfect. Therefore, set aside enough time for practice. The following are a few tips about how to practice:

* Memorize at least the introduction and conclusion.
* Concentrate on the ideas instead of specific words. .
* Use visual aids while practicing.
* Time the practice session.
* Practice in front of a mirror and then people.