

# SKILLS TO PRESENT

## **Authors:**

Antonija Blatnik

Irena Hlača

Justina Husu

Katja Kapele

Barbara Vidic

## **Materials contributed by following schools:**

Agrupamento de Escolas de Moremor-o-Novo (Portugal)

Hristo Botev Primary School (Bulgaria)

Jelgava Secondary School (Latvia)

Osnovna šola Šmihel (Slovenia)

Primary School Jelenia (Slovakia)

Szkola Podstawowa No.3 (Poland)

Zakladni skola Ostrava (Czech Republic)

**Photos:** Helena Murgelj and Vesna Slapničar

**Computer design:** Karmen Jenič

**Video editing:** Andrej Lenartič and Matevž Sladič

**April, 2016**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Introduction
2. Public presentation
3. Elements of public presentation
4. Examples of public presentation in school
5. Guidelines for effective presentation
6. Guidelines for Power Point presentation
7. Evaluation of public presentation

## INTRODUCTION

The handbook was created with the cooperation of the school that participate in the Erasmus+ project titled Effective communication in the school year 2015/2016. Its purpose is to explore and improve public presentation, its types and to give examples of good practices. We added practical tips for performance and evaluation of public presentation. Examples of good practices can also be seen on the CD attached to the handbook.

We wish the handbook is a helpful assistant at your educating endeavours.



## PUBLIC PERFORMANCE

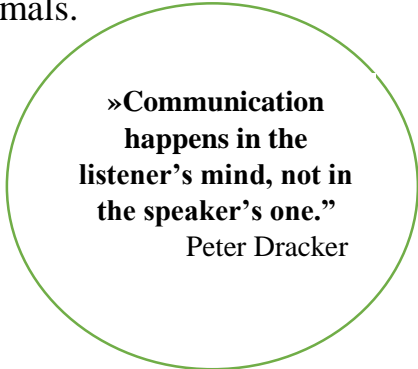
Public presentation is every communication with the audience. Actually, we perform all the time, often also publicly, in front of different audiences. It is important to be aware of the fact that our abilities to convey the message are decisive for how the audience accept our message. Therefore, learning of the communication skills is important activity in the educational process.

**Communication** is the purposeful activity of changing information, thoughts, opinions and feelings among living beings, people and animals.

We distinguish two basic types of communication:

➤ **Verbal** – words are used

➤ **Nonverbal** – words are not used. Meaning is conveyed in the form of non-word messages. Examples of nonverbal communication include haptic communication, gestures, body language, facial expression, eye contact, and how one dresses.



»Communication happens in the listener's mind, not in the speaker's one.»  
Peter Drucker

Public presentation is for many people one of the biggest fears, accompanied by stage fright, a lump in one's throat, sweaty palms. All this is accompanied by the curious looks of the audience and the presenter has a feeling like they have lost words. But there not only words that convey our messages and it does not suffice only to tell something.

We need to know, how we will tell something, in order to convey the intended message. What is very important is body language, mimics, eye contact, an outlook and especially the first impression that we make on the audience.

With the help of different handbooks, we can learn how to make an effective presentation. However, we also need to find enough courage to engage in public presentation.

***Fear defeats more people  
than any other one thing in  
the world.***

Ralph Waldo Emerson

A bit of stage fright can even be of benefit for us because the feeling of not being good enough usually leads us towards better preparation.

The intention of public presentation is presenting a specific topic to the audience.

It is planned on the basis of goals of our presentation. We ask ourselves, what is that we want to achieve. Usually it takes place in the form of lecture or speech, which intention is informing or persuading. The focus need to be on the participants, so that it fulfils their expectations and interests. The presentation should leave the impression on the audience about the presented topic. It must be interesting and well-prepared. It should consist of introduction, main part and conclusion.

Most people, at some point in their life, will need to stand up and speak in front of a group of people. Teaching students the necessary skills for doing this will therefore help them to do this more successfully

# ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC PRESENTATION

For a successful public presentation 3 elements need to be in balance:

## 1. SPEECH

In speech we use words to express, what we want to tell the audience. The speech reflects thoughts, feelings, intention, relationship to audience and in a way it expresses ourselves (the pitch of the voice). With the speech we convey the audience the content, in order to inform, persuade, enthrall the audience or influence their emotions.

The intention is decisive for the way that we speak: the way of speaking when telling the story will differ from the speech on professional topic.

Important is that we use different rhetorical figures, like rhetorical questions, repetition, metaphors, but there must not come to excessive use. Only the text and the way of speaking expresses the relationship toward the speaker. Therefore, it is important that the speech is grammatically correct, appropriately loud and that we adjust the speech rate to the intention, content, audience.

## 2. BODY LANGUAGE

Body language is an important supplement to the speech. The body does not lie and it always reveals the truth, therefore, it can be a powerful support to our presentation or it can make us unpersuasive.

Body language can be divided into:

- **position of the body and body parts**

Body position expresses, whether we are convinced about what we speak. Important is that we stand firmly with opened arms toward the audience and with our head up.

- **facial expression**

Facial expression supports our speech through eye contact, facial muscles, friendliness and smile. It gives the message to the audience about whether we are relaxed and self-assured about the topic that we present.

- **eyes**

Eyes are an important link with the audience and are next to the voice an important messenger of the content. The presenter should during their speech maintain the eye contact with the audience and should respond to their suggestions and messages of approval.

When we make a public performance it is beneficial also our tidy appearance with an appropriate choice of clothes.

### **3. PRESENTATION**

When making a public performance, the speech and body languages is strongly supported by our presentation. This means that the content is presented with different illustrations. In school public presentation this can be done with the help of posters, pictures, audio tapes and by means of a computer.

At every public performance the right measure of all listed elements should be utilized. Usually individuals have for public performance a natural talent, but for the most part we learn this skill in education and in real-life situations.

## **EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOL**

### **1. PUPILS**

School is a place where the children consciously start to acquire the skills of public performance. This happens during lessons and other school activities. Meaning that with planned activities we develop pupil's natural potentials. With such activities we want to improve pupil's skills of text structuring, which will correspond the intention and the topic, the skill of speaking in front of the audience, the usage of nonverbal language and illustrations. Additionally, the pupil is overcoming the stage fright.

Activities that involve acquiring of these skills are:

#### **a) Morning circle**

Morning circle is a form of communication performed by younger pupils which teaches them how to perform in front of a group. At the beginning of the lesson pupils and a teacher sit around in a circle and talk. First they make a greeting, they count themselves and find out which pupil is absent.

With a small talk and plays we develop social skills, the usage of polite words, expression of emotions and the ability of empathy and consequently provide better inclusion of a pupil in the group.

Throughout the year pupils within the morning circle create a weather calendar, they train time orientation and are lead to observe changes in the nature (seasons, weather). At the end of the talk in the morning circle a teacher presents a plan of following activities.





*Morning circle, 1<sup>st</sup> class, Primary School Smihel*

## **b) Oral performance**



Oral performance is a form of public presentation that takes place in front of the schoolmates and it can be carried out in all classes. A pupil gets the instructions that determine the circumstances and the topic of an oral performance. Then he individually and independently prepares the content and the presentation. Younger students mostly learn the text by heart but at the end of the schooling they already present the topic independently with only the help of keywords.

When pupils are presenting a story, they can make their performance more interesting with costumes and requisites. However, when pupils present a more profound topic their presentation is based on their speech, body language and contact with the listeners.

An oral performance in school is an example of systematic development of rhetorical and public presentation skills.



*Oral performance in the 6<sup>th</sup> class*

### **c) Debate**

Debate is an activity that is marked by argumentative and organised exchange of opinions of two opposing teams. Each debate is carried out in accordance with certain rules. First, debaters get a statement or a thesis that they debate about. Then debaters research the topic of a debate and they gather arguments and supporting facts for these arguments. In school debate can be carried out as a part of a lesson, as motivation for a certain activity or as a competition. Debate is an opportunity for students to gain rhetorical skills, train themselves in fast thinking, good listening and quick formation of thoughts. These skills are very important, as pupils must reject statements of the opposing team. Moreover, a debate teaches them to be responsible speakers, as they cannot use empty phrases and unconfirmed arguments.



*Debate on the topic Words have immense power, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> class, Primary School Šmihel*

#### **d) Performing on school events**

Performance on a school event enables pupils to raise their self-confidence and gives them proof that they have enough skills to perform in front of a bigger group of people and in a bigger room than a classroom. A pupil does a thorough preparation for their performance but what is more, through this type of performance he learns how to depend on other performers and how to react in unpredictable situation, what strengthens his personality traits. It is advisable that as many pupils as possible perform on such events, because in that way we make the performing easier for pupils who have problems with stage fright.







School event *The river of words is keep flowing* (organized in celebration of Slovene cultural holiday)

All presented examples of public performance in school can be seen on links at the end of the handbook or on the CD.

Video recordings have been taken at Primary School Smihel, Slovenia.

## **2. PROFESSIONAL WORKERS (teachers)**

Public speaking (performing) is an everyday form of work for teachers, because it belongs in the curriculum itself. But there are other types of public performing differing from the one mentioned before, because they demand a different approach, have a different purpose and are told to a different audience.

Some types of public performance:

### **a) Professional discussion:**

A professional discussion is guided through certain steps and talks about a professional subject. In a professional discussion we describe a certain state, analyse it and propose improvements for it. It is important that every co-worker gets a say in the matter, everyone carefully listens to what others have to say and also follows their ideas. It is important we can quickly form our thoughts, choose the right words and convey (only) our key points. This type encourages the quieter members of the collective to actively join in on the discussion. We learn this technique of public performing (communication) together, it teaches us to accept what is being said and helps us strive for common good.

### **b) Presenting a good practice**

A teacher prepares a presentation, in which he presents a good practice in front of other professional workers in his school or in front of professional workers in some professional meeting outside of the school. This type enables us to present our best achievements to others. Through this our skills of public communication evolve and improve, because - apart from the speech and body language itself – we must also prepare the material for our presentation. The presentation can take place in the form of a performance or group work, which is also a type of public performance.

### **c) Parent teacher meeting**

Leading a parent-teacher meeting is also one of the types of public performing. The teacher is required to be well prepared for the subject of the meeting and also needs to have good public speaking skills, because parents are a very diverse crowd held together by a common interest: care for the development of their children. These circumstances require the speaker to be easy to understand, explicit and compassionate while still remaining professional. The theme must

also be presented on an appropriate level (not too formal). This type of public performing is important for building trust between parents and teachers.



*Parent teacher meeting on the topic Ethics in communication by Justina Erčulj, Ph.D.*

## **GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD PRESENTATION**

Schools prepare children for public speaking/performing. They must be provided the guidelines for preparing and performing before they give their presentation, after which the teacher provides feedback.

The following guidelines should help teachers at guiding their students.

### **a) PREPARING FOR THE PRESENTATION**

The basis for a successful presentation is the preparation, which should focus on the following:

- Define the goal of the presentation.
- Think about who the presentation is intended to.
- Collect your ideas and write a summary.
- Think about using examples and/or accessories, prepare them.
- Loudly practise your presentation (in front of a mirror, a person or a small group, toys, etc.) and pinpoint the time frame of your presentation.
- Record yourself and upon watching the recording figure out what you can do to make the presentation, your speech and body language better.
- Spice up the content with quotes, videos, anecdotes, etc.
- Watch videos of famous speakers and analyse their presentations.
- Think about how you are going to dress up on the day of the presentation.

**»If you fail to  
prepare, you are  
prepared to fail«**

-Mark Spitz

If you are well prepared, you'll feel more confident and relaxed during the presentation.

### **b) THE DESIGN OF THE PRESENTATION**

A well-constructed presentation is crucial for a successful public performance. Every presentation should be divided into three parts: introduction, main part and conclusion. Here are some guidelines for designing your presentation:

#### **Introduction**

- ~ Introduce yourself.
- ~ Acquire the attention of the audience with questions, examples, jokes, etc.
- ~ Present the main parts of your presentation, give your opinion about the importance of your topic.

- ~ Use quotes.
- ~ Use rhetorical questions.
- ~ Tell a (true) story.

Be interesting, proper, seek connection with the audience, use rhetorical questions, include all participants

### THE MAIN PART

- ~ Emphasise the main theme.
- ~ Use extra material: quotes, examples, statistics, etc.
- ~ Use pictures, anecdotes and different opinions, to establish a connection with your audience.

### THE CONCLUSION

- ~ Sum up your presentation,
- ~ Leave them with something to think about.
- ~ Give the audience enough time to ask questions and to react. Include all participants, if possible.
- ~ Express thanks/give thanks/say thank you.

There is more to a successful presentation than just the structure and content. We also have to mind the following:

### **Speech**

- ~ Use formal language.
- ~ Speak loud and clear.
- ~ Adjust the speed of your speech according to the needs of the presentation. You can get around stage fright by talking slower at the start of the presentation.
- ~ Don't repeat words and expressions, use synonyms.
- ~ Explain foreign terms.
- ~ Avoid fillers (eg. "mmm", yeah, errr, umm, like, etc.).
- ~ Emphasise key words.
- ~ Make a quick pause whenever you want to attract attention.

### **Body language**

- ~ Establish a good connection with the audience – eye contact, questions.
- ~ Maintain eye contact with the whole audience, not just one person.
- ~ Show excitement about the subject you are presenting.
- ~ Wear a smile. 😊
- ~ Make your movements natural and not forced.
- ~ Control your facial expressions and body language.



~ Don't stand on the same place the whole time, move around.

All guidelines provided for students can be applied to public performances given by adults.



*Primary school Jelenia, Slovakia*

Despite of that, adults must be aware of some other elements in their presentation, which differ based on whether they are performing inside or outside their usual work environment. These elements are listed below, along with some small tips:

- Be well informed about the location of your presentation.
- Make sure you arrive on time.

- Check to see if all technical equipment is working correctly (microphone, computer, projector, (loud)speakers) before the audience arrives.
- Familiarize yourself with the lighting in the hall
- Prepare summaries for the audience – make sure your listeners not only hear the information given to them, but also see it. People tend to remember only a third of what we hear and half of what we see. We remember things best when we try them ourselves.
- While presenting, stick to the point. You should always know what you are talking about.
- You will be more convincing, if you advocate ideas you agree with.
- Illustrate facts with examples. Use personal examples and stories whenever it is possible. However, be sure the stories emphasise the message of your presentation.
- Be natural when it comes to using humour, but don't over-do it and don't make fun of the audience.
- Tell what you announced (you were going to tell).
- Watch the audience's reaction – make sure your listeners aren't bored.
- The conclusion is your last chance to leave a strong impression on the audience; with this in mind you can recall your introductory words or use a concluding slogan or challenge the audience to join a cause, etc.



*Primary school Jelenia, Slovakia*

## GUIDELINES FOR A POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Good PowerPoint presentation:

- ~ is a good support not the main part of the presentation
- ~ Contains mostly graphic elements such as pictures, graphs, charts, ...
- ~ Does not contain too much text (not more than six lines on a slide, just the cues)
- ~ Is made by principle one slide one idea
- ~ Has to have appropriate fonts (e.g. Arial, Vedrana, Lucida Sans, etc.)
- ~ Has to have appropriate font size (at least 32)
- ~ Has various different slides (e.g. One with text, another with pictures and no text)
- ~ The colour of fonts is in clear contrast with the background
- ~ Not too many colours and different fonts
- ~ Not too many slides (15-20)

- ~ Not too long (cca. 20 min)
- ~ Has to have short headlines (not longer than two lines)
- ~ Needs to be simple and understandable
- ~ Can have humourous elements (but not too much)
- ~ Video and audio elements are included
- ~ There should not be too many animations (too distracting)
- ~ The language should not contain too much foreign and complicated words

### **Choice of colours**

Having different colours in your presentation is recommended because colours:

- ~ evoke feelings
- ~ express emotions
- ~ have impact on motivation
- ~ can highlights the important things and impact on the memory

### Recommeneded colours combinations

<b>Background colour</b>	<b>Object colour</b>	<b>Accent colour</b>
white	dark blue, green, black	red, orange
light grey	blue, green, black	red
blue	light yellow, white	yellow
light blue	dark blue, dark green	red

But: avoid too colourful presentations .

### **Graphic elements should be:**

- ~ Easy too understand
- ~ Connected to the theme
- ~ Clear and in the right size
- ~ In the right contrast

## **EVALUATION OF THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

Of the same importance as planning of the public presentation is also its evaluation. We ask each other next questions:

- ~ What did we want to achieve (planning)?
- ~ What did we achieve (report)?
- ~ Why didn't we achieve what we planned (evaluation)?

The best evaluators are the audience. From them we learn if the presentation was successful, its good points and what do we need to improve.

The basis of the evaluation is the feedback information and the authors' critical observations and feelings connected to the presentation.

Evaluation of the student's performance can be done with their peers, other colleagues or even a video.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EVALUATION**

### **A) NONVERBAL ELEMENTS**

- ~ Hand gestures - too much/too little?
- ~ Smile?
- ~ Eye contact with audience - None/some/all of them?
- ~ Posture during performance - strong/remote/weak?
- ~ Body language
- ~ Self confidence? Positive impressions?

### **B) VOICE**

- ~ Loud/quiet/clear/muffled
- ~ Quickly or slow?
- ~ Monotonous or diverse
- ~ The use of humour – too much/ too little?

## CONTENT

- ~ Well structured and following a logical sequence?
- ~ Was the speaker enthusiastic?
- ~ Was the speaker well prepared
- ~ Was there an introduction and conclusion?
- ~ Did they finish within time limit?
- ~ Was the talk too simple or too complex and jargon-filled?
- ~ Was it interesting?
- ~ Were notes used? Were they read out, or just used for key points?
- ~ Did they interact with and involve the audience?

### **10 most common fears at public performance (by Mark Tyrell)**

1. You cannot talk – open your mouth
2. You forget what you need to say – your mind is empty
3. You have a tiresome person in the audience
4. You have someone who knows more than you do in the audience
5. The audience notices that you are nervous
6. You have to leave the stage
7. Your bad presentation humiliates you in front of your friends
8. You don't know the answer to the question from the audience
9. The audience is leaving
10. You die – this one is invented, so that the number 10 is reached. ☺