IMPROVING TEACHERS VISUAL PRESENTATIONS WITH SIMPLICITY, CLARITY AND BREVITY

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Abstract

In appearance, computer-assisted slide presentations have always been here. However, their use started being common twenty-five years ago. The first version of PowerPoint was created in 1987 in order to show presentations in Mac platforms. After some months, it was sold to Microsoft and thanks to the popularity of his Microsoft Windows Operating System, it reached the global market and became popular in the world.

Nevertheless, over the years, this popular tool has not been properly used. The main reason why many presentations are failing in the communication process is due to the slides are big containers of huge streams of text. According to the work related to cognitive load theory in [1], the process of information becomes more difficult if it arrives at us in two ways: verbally and in a written way. Thus, taking into account that people can not listen and read correctly at the same time, displays or shows slides filled with tons of text is not effective and should be avoided. However, multimedia information can be processed while listening to a person speaking about the visual content.

On one hand, an important quantity of available and created presentations are long, boring and bad, besides to mainly content-free. On the other hand, it would be more interesting to produce short, simple, legible and engaging slides with meaningful context.

In this work, we aim at improving the teacher’s skills in creating effective visual presentations. We divided this work in three stages. First, teachers receive information and material for the preparation, design, and delivery of effective and efficient presentations. In the second stage, they brought to the classroom past presentations, and taking into account that research [1] supports the concept that it is indeed more difficult for audiences to process information when it is presented in spoken and written form at the same time, the visual content is carefully analysed. Finally, they modified the past presentations and showed in the classroom the changes and the reasons to support them.

As a conclusion, teacher’s realised that given a slot of time to present, for example 20 minutes, the use of displays to show slides full of text are not effective. So, as commented before, the difficulty for the audience in terms of listening and reading at the same time becomes in a very poor communication if this type of text style presentations is used. In these cases, it would be more convenient that speakers keep in silence and let the audience read the slides. But, it is raises an important question, what do speakers are needed for?

Finally, teachers understood that, while using multimedia yet, the use of multimedia technology is not appropriate for every case, and they improved their presentations focus on designing and delivering presentations while preserving the principles of restraint, simplicity and naturalness.

Keywords: Presentations, visual content, teacher skills, digital content, slides.