ENV 202/502 INTRODUCTORY REMOTE SENSING

Practical Exercise 11 – Communicating Remote Sensing Information

# Overview

This practical is rather different to those from previous weeks. It is a challenge in scientific communication. It has often been observed that to portray something simply requires a far deeper knowledge of the topic than to use a lot of technical jargon. Therefore, today’s exercise will require you to tell a story about something quite technical, but in a simple manner to children. Keep in mind the quote from Denzel Washington’s character in Philadelphia: “explain it to me like I’m a four year old”. You may choose the same topic as you researched in Week 1 and plan to use for your final report. Students may work in pairs for this particular practical exercise.

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this practical, students will be able to:

1. Identify and profile a target audience;
2. Select an appropriate remote sensing topic for explanation to a lay audience;
3. Explain a complex topic to a selected audience group; and
4. Develop a presentation appropriate to the audience and selected topic.

## Preparation

You should have completed the pre-class theory readings and questions prior to coming to the lecture.

## Required data

There are no set data for this exercise, but you may use anything you like from previous practical exercises.

## Additional Software

Powerpoint (for making a poster, NOT for giving a presentation), Prezi, Goanimate, Weebly / Wix, Videoscribe, powtoons…

# Defining Your Audience

One of the most important tasks in successful communication is to understand your target audience. Without effectively scoping the audience, it is very difficult to ensure that you are pitching your story at the right level. More commonly than not, we tend to over-complicate our communication, leaving our audience with glazed eyes, baffled by technical concepts. It takes a real skill to be able to simplify your material so that everyone gains a benefit from it.

This week I have defined the audience for you – six year old children!

The topic that you are going to communicate will be related to remote sensing in your chosen topic area that you have been working on throughout the semester. For example, you might choose to educate children about how remote sensing can help us monitor cyclones, detect coral bleaching, identify invasive weeds…

Your message needs to be simple so that your audience can understand. It needs to be interesting so that they will be engaged and remember the message. However the real challenge is to retain content. Being able to communicate an idea simply requires an in-depth understanding of the topic first!

You now need to choose your purpose, and the presentation style you are going to use. To help you select your presentation style, you should think about your pre-class readings.

**Tick your selected purpose and presentation style below**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Selection** |
| Purpose |
| To inform |  |
| To educate |  |
| To raise awareness |  |
| To persuade |  |
| To entertain |  |
|  |  |
| Presentation Style |
| Brochure |  |
| Poster |  |
| Role play |  |
| Cartoon |  |
| Animation |  |
| Video |  |
| Other (discuss with lecturer) |  |

Here’s some free online tools that might be of interest to help you create your product:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sparkol VideoScribe | Great for creating short whiteboard style animations to explain certain concepts, either by instructor or student. 7 day free trial or paid subscriptions | <http://www.videoscribe.co/>  |
| GoAnimate | For creating animated cartoons. Free with limited functionality | <http://goanimate.com/>  |
| Pixton | For creating cartoon strips | <http://www.pixton.com/uk/>  |
| Weebly | Website creation and hosting interface | <http://weebly.com>  |

Q1. Describe your context, your audience’s context and the context of the presentation by considering the following:

- What is your role and what is your relationship to the audience? For example, a teacher, as subject matter expert, in a primary school classroom.

- What assumptions are you making about your audience in relation to their knowledge of your topic, of remote sensing and of science in general?

- Does this presentation stand alone or is it part of a collection? E.g a series about remote sensing applications, or coral reefs…

 (2 points)

# Creating a Presentation

## Brainstorming

Spend ten minutes (no more!) to **brainstorm everything that you can think of about your topic**. The key here is to write EVERYTHING down – don’t exclude anything at this stage.

## Refining

Creating a great presentation requires time and patience. We are going to work on this only within the space of the lecture and practical timeslot though, so are limited to five hours. While this may seem like a lot of time, it’s easy to lose focus. Therefore it is important to distil the main themes or ideas out of your brainstorming session.

Spend a further ten minutes to refine your ideas to come up with your audience ‘take away’ points.

Q2. What are the main points that you want your audience to walk away knowing after they see / watch your animation / brochure / poster etc. What do you want them to be able to tell their parents when they go home? You can choose up to three points only! Think carefully about your purpose here as well. (3 points)

Q3. You now have a total of four hours to develop your communication item and present it to the class. External students – this is also a guideline for you in terms of how much work is required. Please don’t spend longer than four hours on this. Post your contribution to Padlet by writing your name, topic choice, and uploading your contribution – click the upwards arrow <http://padlet.com/kejoyce/env202502-comm> (20 points).



You might find the following checklist useful as you create your product.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Checklist** | **Yes** | **No** | **Not sure** | **Comments** |
| Is the context, purpose and intended audience clearly communicated (either explicitly or implicitly)? |  |  |  |  |
| Is the choice of presentation style suitable for the intended audience? |  |  |  |  |
| Does the language used suit the intended audience? |  |  |  |  |
| Does the tone of the presentation suit the intended audience? |  |  |  |  |
| Is the length of the presentation appropriate for the audience and purpose? |  |  |  |  |
| Is there an appropriate balance of text and images/animations? |  |  |  |  |
| Does the presentation meet its purpose? |  |  |  |  |
| Is the presentation effective? |  |  |  |  |

# Top Tips

1. Know your target audience;
2. Simplify, simplify, simplify!
3. A picture speaks a thousand words. Use graphics and animations where possible.