Cognizance of Power Point Presentations: Skill Development Perspectives through Practice

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Abstract:

Presenting is an art of complex amalgamations entwined with multi-disciplinary skills. Power Point Presentation facilitates in enhancing the capabilities of presenting. Cognizance of power point presentations makes a difference and may positively lead to better performance, acceptability, appreciation and success. The failures and disappointments observed in trainees after presentations are due to lack of this cognizance which can be raised through practice. Practice refines the customary repetition of habits and quells fossilization. It helps the trainees in realizing their limitations and controlling them. The perspectives which are bound to direct practicing trainees towards the development of their Power Point Presentations skills, realized by the learners of Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies, are presented in this paper. The perspectives are realistic and thought provoking, and may alter the prejudices of both the presenters and the audience; the cognizance of which can also be ascertained from Atwood, C. G. (2017), Bienvenu, S. (2000), Jolles, R. L. (2017) and Theobald, T. (2016).

Introduction:

The changes in the system of education in the digital era had revolutionized the approaches to teaching. One of the methods adopted by the teachers is to teach using the power point presentation, a technology that was first developed in 1987 by Microsoft. Based on the needs of its usage it has been modified and updated with several versions till date. With the outcome being expected to be positive, it has been encouraged to be used by the learners for their autonomy in learning, and by the teachers for easy and interesting mode of activating knowledge in learners. However, the opinions of both the teachers and learners vary because of its usage being in excess or in limitation. Though Bartsch, R. A., & Cobern, K. M. (2003) investigated about the effectiveness of PowerPoint presentations in lectures, and found to obtain hardly any significance in its usage, the opinions that the learners and teachers carried does not much alter the outcome of their learning process, unless there is practice and awareness of the perspectives for skill development in presenting using a PowerPoint.

The Problem:

PowerPoint Presentations given by teachers and learners ending in dissatisfaction is due to their performance and the transfer of feedback from their audience. Lack of regularity in demonstrating in a similar mode and lack of awareness on the perspectives to develop the skill of presenting using a PowerPoint, desires the need for training.

The Need:

Training and Practice have been found to be the essential sources for developing the skill of presenting supported by a PowerPoint to encounter the multiple challenges existent in it, and hence, the need. Awareness, feedback and self analysis on a regular basis assures of solutions to the problems of fear, anxiety, and the pressure of accountability. Development of the skill based on the intuition of the trainees is the obligation for a PowerPoint Presentation to be supreme.

Hypothesis:

Awareness on the perspectives of the practicing trainees helps in developing their skill of PowerPoint Presentations.

Review of Literature:

The skill development in practicing trainees may marvel themselves and the audience. In her experiences of training the trainees on presentation skills in a workshop organized by the Association of Talent Development, Atwood (2017) expressed that '*the ones who had been the most scared to present received standing ovations from the group who saw the transformation that had occurred as a result of that day's activities'*.

Emphasizing on the cognizance, Bradbury (2006) says '*There's no mystery about creating and delivering effective presentations – unless you've never had the opportunity to find out how to do it right. We're talking about a skill, and like any other skill it can be learnt'*.

Hughes and Weller (1991) discuss about how one can analyze and encourage oneself. They state the importance of the preparations to be made, pitfalls to be avoided in self presentation and progressions through everyday activities for an effective and successful outcome.

Research Methodology:

A qualitative approach was followed to draw the data from the target group that consisted of eight RGUKT undergraduate trainees. Their perspectives were recorded regularly based on their performances

and what they thought about how they could better their performances. Support was received from their peers in terms of the feedback and intuition of how the performance of the trainees could have been improved or bettered. The observation reports and the oral recordings from the trainees' conference were used as tools to collect, analyze and interpret the data. The trainees were asked to plan and reflect on their presentations for raising their cognizance on PowerPoint Presentations.

Perspectives / Responses of the trainees:

- Text should be less and examples should be more (Daily life)

- Errors should be less

- Images should be there - related to that topic

- It should be attractive - words, way of presentation

- Should maintain body language and eye contact

- Spontaneous answering when doubts are asked

- Asking the audience questions while presenting

- Creating curiosity in the audience as to what would be following\

- It should be formal - dressing, presentation, etc.

- Do not wear attractive ornaments so that the audience do not get diverted or attracted towards those, and the when the projector light falls on the ornament, it reflects and people cannot concentrate.

- It should have animations as people may be attracted towards the PPT

- Greet and get the response of the audience

- Have background music to attract the audience

- The presenter should have sense of humour

- Different fonts

- Stress the words that are to be emphasized

- Use colours that are visible and clear so that the audience can see

- Main points should be highlighted

- Topic should be interesting, and if it is a routine and boring topic, the presentation should be made interesting.

- Interest can be created by asking questions or giving warm-up activities.

- Should have done enough research on the topic

- The presenter should have clarity on the topic

- He should write references from where he had picked those points

- He should write conclusions and suggestions and precautions if it is related to science and result. He should be able to do mind mapping too (Having a separate slide for it). eg. Giving an overview and blueprints, etc.

- If possible the presenter can get models and explain despite having the PPT.

- The presenter should have the ability to compare two things. E.g. A film and a text.

- Set everything before presenting like having the PPT ready, electric problems, etc. Have time sense. Complete the presentation in/on time.

- He should have patience; he should react positively even if somebody cracks a joke. It should not be boring.

- Do not read from the slides.

- Use a laser pointer torch to highlight or point the text that is being referred to.

- Have a mike ready if the hall is big.

- He should not get diverted from the topic so that it might create a nuisance.

- The text should not have controversial information.

- Avoid gender bias.

- To have relevant videos which are not lengthy and boring.

- To be submissive... not to show the attitude.

- Use intonation

- Do not begin the topic directly. Taking the feedback after the presentation is important.

- Do no murmur while presenting.

- Gesture when necessary.

- Do not get the audience to a state of confusion.

- Be specific and not general.

- Do not show that you are tensed. Portray confidence.

- Avoid fillers and cliché.

- Avoid repeating the same point again and again unless there is a need for emphasis.

- Do not stay in one place constantly. Keeping moving whenever required.

- Do not show unnecessary emotions.

- Saves time. Writing on the board takes much time in the class.

- Not to be angry while presenting.

- Teaching using PPT's is boring

- Presenting in the afternoon's is least liked

- It should not go beyond the time limit

- Students' laugh when they present in front of their friends

- Audience is not expected to question the presenter as everyone feels that the presenter is being interrupted.
- The flow might get disturbed and the presenter may become nervous.
- Do not chew gum or Pan or any other thing while presenting.
- The audience is not expected to sleep.
- The presenter should not let the interest of the audience be lost
- The presenter is neither expected to consume alcohol nor smoke.
- Complex words should not be used.
- Mobiles should be on a silent mode and the presenter is not expected to pick the calls or message during the presentation.
- There should be no interruption or a break which may disturb the attention and focus of the audience. Though there may be some external factors, the presenter should be able to handle them based on the priority of the situation.
- The learners feel that the presenter is least bothered about the audience when the presentation is given for the sake of giving.
- The presenter should present to share knowledge rather give it to impress someone or gain marks.
- The topic should be related and relevant to the audience.
- Do not give scope for the learners to laugh at what is being put on the PPT's
- Repeated presentations should be minimal.
- Dominant behavior should be avoided and learning behavior should be encouraged.
- Not in a state to present
- That the presentation is enough to be kept to a limited extent
- Some audience show least interest in listening to the presentations.

Categorization and Interpretation:

The perspectives or responses collected from the trainees and their observation reports could be categorized into twenty different aspects: Information, Body Language, Spontaneity, Involvement, Formality, Creativity, Interaction, Style, Colours, Content Knowledge (Researchable Ability), Awareness, Generating Interest, Intonation, Realia, Comparing Ability, Preparation or Rehearsal, Managing a Situation, Beating Around the Bush, Controlling the State of Mind and Ambience. The appropriacy of the perspectives to be classified only into a certain category was difficult as they could fit into more than one category. From these categories, it can be interpreted that there needs a development of the skill in multiple disciplines, and that the practice of presenting using a PowerPoint would create awareness in the trainees to master the art of presenting.

Findings:

The hypothetical statement 'Awareness on the perspectives of the practicing trainees helps in developing their skill of PowerPoint Presentations' can be accepted based on how the learners realized and kept improving after every presentation. Also, self-questioning and raise in consciousness was clearly evident from the perspectives drawn from them.

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