

Presentation skills and communication strategies:

How to be heard in legal studies

Marion Panizzon, University of Bern

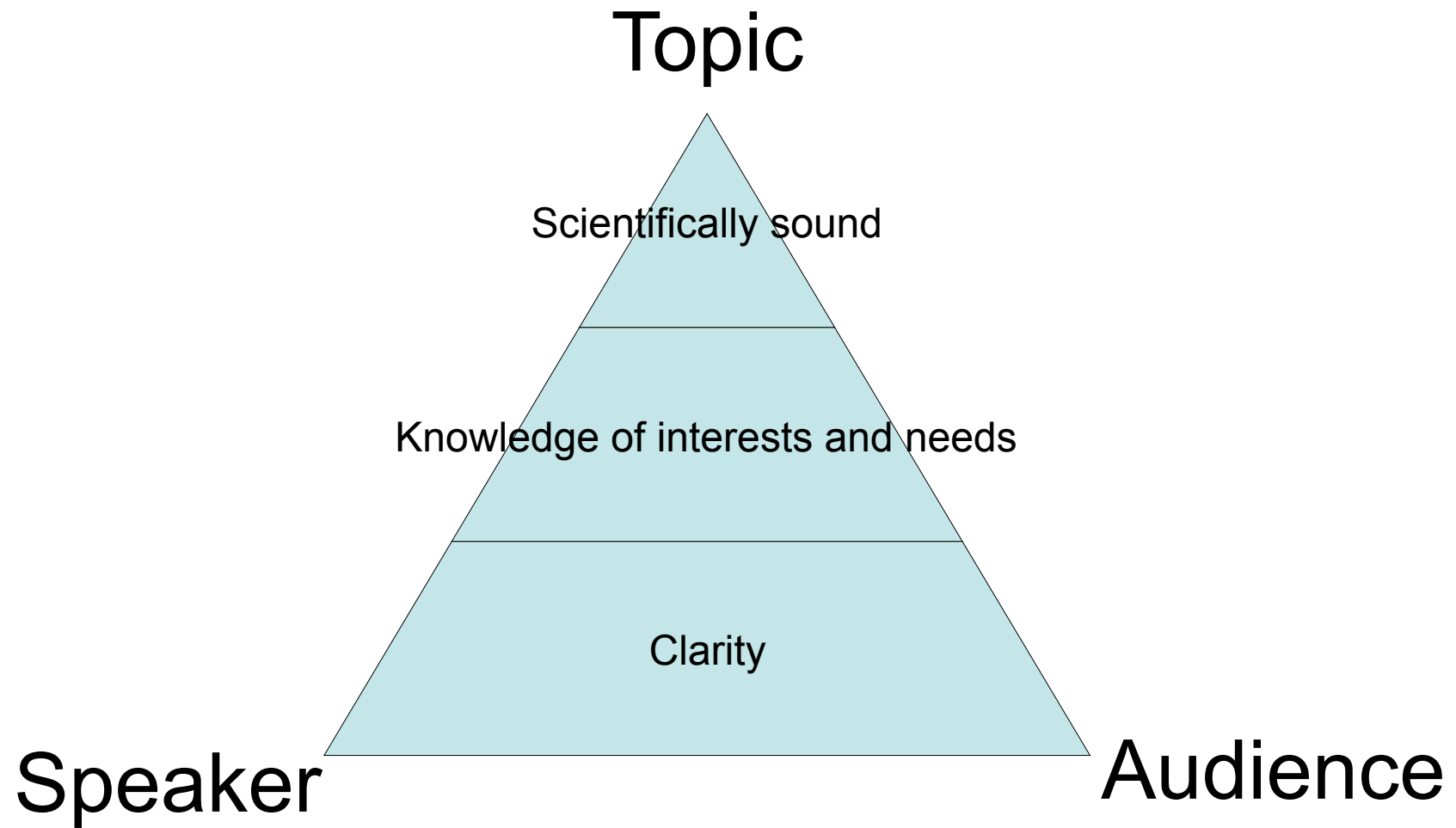
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Wednesday, 22 February 2012

Overview

- Topic
- Audience
- Speaker

Triadic relationship



Topic of your talk

Presenting your PhD

Topic

1. Title, Authors
2. Outline
3. Research question
4. Motivation: Aims and objectives
5. Relevancy: Relation to the literature
6. Methodology
7. Main Results
8. Conclusions

Research Question

- **clear, focused, complex (and arguable) question**
- **you are genuinely curious about**
→ narrow down the topic, remove incoherences, provide room for analysis

Research Q.

- **Unclear:** *Why is the harmonization of EU law on contracts incoherent and imperfect?*
- **Clear:** *How are EU Member States experiencing and reacting to the loss of competencies associated with EU efforts at harmonizing contract law?*

Research Q., cnt'd

- **Too simple:** *How is EU contract law being harmonized?*
- **Appropriately complex:** *What are the challenges associated with the current efforts to harmonize contract law in the EU and how should a reform of harmonization efforts address the need for European diversity?*

Research Q., cnt'd

- **Unfocused:** *Given the EU current legal framework on immigration, which set of morally cogent principles should guide a (more) just immigration policy?*
- **Focused:** *How should the morally cogent principle of non-domination associated with the neo-republican tradition and values such as moral equality and mobility guide efforts towards a globally (more) just EU immigration policy?*

Research Q, cnt 'd

- Unclear: *The main research question consists of the exploration of the termination of contracts for services from a theoretical and comparative point of view*
- Clear: *How should long-term services contracts be designed to be terminated in a manner that adequately balances the individual liberty of the parties against the obligatory force of the contract*

Research Q., cnt 'd

- Unfocussed: *This paper aims to show with the example of Germany, how a federalist structure influences the position of a Member State in the EU*
- Focussed: *What are the challenges of transfer of sovereignty for federalist EU Member States, like Germany, what mechanisms enable sub-federal entities to participate in EU policy-making, notably through the EU Committee of the Regions and how could Switzerland draw from the German example to rejuvenate its own federalist structures.*

Motivation: Aims and objectives

- Explain scientific & practical reasons leading to choice of topic & method
 - Why did I start?
 - What did I do?
 - What did I find?
 - What does it mean?*
- limit scope of study, discuss broader implication

*S. Shephard's four questions

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Relevance: Relation to the Literature

- „Putting the contribution of your PhD into perspective by describing how it fits with what is already known“
→ discuss the most closely related work

Relevance: Added-value

- What is the gap in the current knowledge?
 - What is my specific contribution to the community?
 - How much of what is learned here can be extended beyond this specific setting
- pull audience to what is new about study

Methodology

- Case study
 - Germany 's federalism in EU integration
- Case-law analysis
 - CJEU, Swiss Supreme Court/administrative court, German Constitutional Court decisions/judgments
- Comparative legal analysis
 - Swiss federalism vs German federalism and the EU

Main Results

1. keep things simple
 2. use examples
 3. present „special cases“, rather than the „paper in full generality“
 4. provide insight that audience can take away from the study
- motivate why you think things turned out as they did

Conclusions

- Deliver the „take home message“
- Identify controversies
 - focus on cutting-edge
 - formulate own opinion
- Point to:
 - implications for future research
 - limitations of results
 - new questions opened

If you have less time...

1. Research question
2. Methodology/ Relevancy (depending on what is more cutting-edge)
3. Main Results
4. Conclusions

Audience

„being heard“

Audience

- Difficult audiences:
 - a world-known expert on the subject, as well as people who know nothing about the subject
- Anticipate a „diverse, intelligent, but possible ignorant, audience“

Speaker

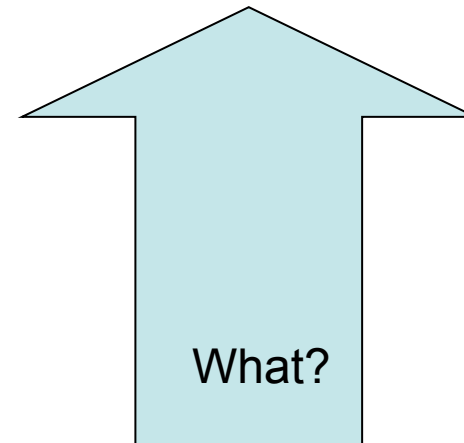
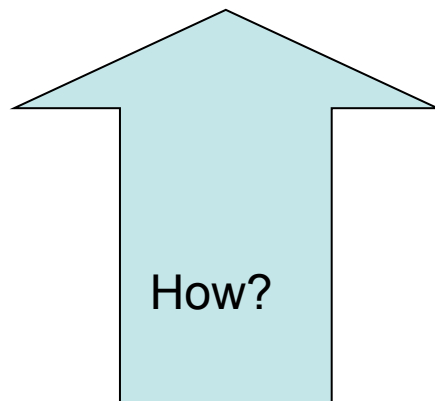
engaging with the community

Speaker

- „Tritt frisch auf, machs Maul auf, hör bald auf“
- Be **p**repared, be **p**rofessional, be **p**rompt (three „Ps“)
 - do not make excuses, respect time-limits, do not meta-comment on your speaking
- Organization
- Clarity
- Communication

Visualize & structure

- Tables
 - Graphs
 - Schemes
 - Maps
 - Flow-charts
- Methods
 - Results
 - Central concepts
 - Challenges, choices and criteria („CCC“)*



*S. Shephard

Powerpoints

- keep each bullet to one line only
 - If the bullets seem to require more than one line...you may be covering more than one idea in a bullet
- 20pt (Times Roman) for office rooms (less than 15 people), 24pt for conferences and workshops
- Use comics, fancy art, pictures sparingly
- Limit animations to bullet-by-bullet appearance

Further reading

- Jackson, Matthew, O., Notes on Presenting a Paper, Social Sciences 212a, Fall 1998, available at:
<http://www.stanford.edu/~jacksonm/present.pdf>.
- Shephard, Sarah, Speaking out and being heard in your scientific community, prepared for NCCR North-South, NCCR Trade and NCCR Climate workshop, January 2011

Thanks for your attention!

marion.panizzon@wti.org