



Preparation questions for assessing the personal setting

- **How many people will you address?**
 - Small group: interactive presentations often work best in groups of up to fifteen persons
 - Medium-sized groups: up to sixty people, importance of using tools increases
 - Large groups: above sixty people; importance of simple/concise messages increases
- **Why are they there?**
 - Obligatory (course)
 - Voluntary: did they have to pay to attend?
 - Because of their involvement with the topic
 - Out of interest
- What is the **composition** of your audience?
 - Demographic characteristics: age, gender, culture
 - Educational background
- What is the **level of understanding** of the topic of the audience?
 - Experts (professors) → focus most on content and information
 - Fellow students → focus more on persuasion
 - General audience (Thesis presentation) → balance persuasion and content
- What is **their status**: are they decision-makers?
- What is **your status** (in the eyes of the audience)?
 - What is your **reputation**?
 - What is your level of credibility (*ethos*) with the audience, i.e. to what extent do you have to explain who you are?
- Who is officially **'in charge'**?
 - Chairman of the day
 - The teacher or a tutor
 - A fellow student
 - Remember: ultimately you are always in charge of your own presentation
- Will you be the end, or the beginning, of a long **sequence** of presentations?
 - First presentation of the day: 'wake up call' for most
 - Second presentation: most focused and active listening posture
 - Third presentation: span of attention will wither away and additional means are needed to keep them involved
 - Fourth presentation: try to get out of this position (depends a bit on the time of the previous presentations; in case of short presentations, it need not be bad)
 - Fifth presentation: ask for a break
- Will your presentation be immediately before, or after, a **break**?
 - Before a break: understand that you are the only person keeping the audience from getting a break; you don't have to make the presentation shorter – just assertive – but nevertheless assess what this circumstance implies for the effectiveness of your speech
 - After a break: understand that you are the first to talk to an audience after they have interacted with each other; relate to this
- Who are the **other speakers**?
 - Same story: establish possible overlap and use this as a linking-pin for your own presentation
 - Different story: make sure that the audience does not get confused; provide a 'bridge' with the other presentations