UNIT 4. THE PROFFESSION

ELEMENT 2. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

COMMUNICATING WITH VALIDATORS AND END-USERS

Video Lecture Transcript

Slide 1

Hello and welcome to this video lecture. The lecture is a part of Unit 4-The profession, Element 2- Interpersonal skills. My name is Tatjana Knapp and I will speak about communication with the end-users, mainly in the validation process.

Slide 2

We discuss the process of validation in Unit 2, explaining it is a process of assessing whether the content is, in fact, Easy-to-understand. The process should actively include the end-users of Easy-to-understand information and is often considered to be a crucial part in the process of publishing Easy-to-understand information.

A crucial part of the validation process is, however, communication. Communication is the key to successfull validation. In this lecture, we discuss basic ''rules'' of successfull communication with validators and end-users and offer some advice on how to ask efficient questions to get useful answers.

Slide 3

Based on practical experience and literature review, Haramija and Knapp defined 15 ''golden rules'' or tips for communicating with the end-users and validators.

The first rule is show respect. Additionally, we never want to speak with adult end-users and validators in the same manner as we would with children.

Secondly, allow enough time. Understanding and processing the message to give feedback requires time. Sometimes we feel like a person responded out of the blue but upon further thought we might realize they provided a question to the answer we were asking a while ago.

Thirdly, remember to speak relatively slowly and clearly.

Slide 4

If possible, opt for a quiet location for your validation sessions. Try to eliminate possible interference. Sometimes might be helpful if the validator or validators already know the location and feel comfortable there.

Though a validator might be accompanied by a support person or an assistant, remember to always address the validator directly. Focus on them and try to maintain the eye contact, if possible.

It is always a good idea to check if the validators might use communicators, folders with pictograms or a related low or high technology devices. Augmentative and alternative communication can be very useful. If the person does not use it and if we work together with

them for a longer period of time, assessing whether they would benefit from communication aids could be in place. Try finding the methods and tools that really work.

Remember that people likely understand more than it seems. Sometimes a lack of feedback does not stem from possible poor understanding. The validator could also have difficulties expressing the feedback.

Always focus on the abilities of the validators and try to give positive feedback.

Slide 5

Remember to use simple language and short sentences.

If you fail to understand the message the end-user or validator is trying to communicate with you, be honest and admit it. Trust us, most people will notice if you pretend to understand them.

Make sure that the end-user or validator understands you, too. Never ask questions such as 'Do you understand?' or 'Do you not understand?' There is a high probability that the person will answer such questions with '' Yes '' regardless. What kind of questions to ask is briefly suggested later in the lecture.

When a person fails to understand, try rephrasing the message or question.

Using real-life examples is almost always beneficial.

Slide 6

Repeating and summarizing important information is always useful.

And last but not least, regardless if you work with a group or an individual, you need to ensure confidentiality. The materials you are working on sometimes encourage the validators to share their personal

information and different stories. You want to make sure that this kind of information stays confidential.

Slide 7

As promised, we now move to what kind of questions to ask the validators during the validation process. Some questions are useful and lead towards high-quality end products, others are not and only serve as a formality.

From experience, useful questions are the ones that are specific and related to the text or picture we are validating. They are usually the famous 5ws questions: who, what, when, where and why.

Examples of such questions could be:

Why did the cat fell off the shelf?

What do you see in this picture?

Slide 8

To list a few more useful examples, we could ask something like:

How many cars does the boss have?

When was the woman born?

Who is the old man's son?

In which country or where is Paris located?

Slide 9

Questions that do not help the validation process, on the other hand, are mostly those that can be answered with a simple "yes" or a "no" or make the validator choose option they like the most. For example, you might wish to avoid questions such as:

Did you understand what the text says?

Is the illustration clear and adequate?

Slide 10

Do you think the text is well written?

Do you prefer A or B?

Is the text written in Easy-to-understand language?

These types of question can give false confirmations and do not ensure the quality of the final validated product.

Slide 11

We are concluding this lecture with some additional advice that might prove to be helpful.

Remember to ask your validators one question at the time. You wish to work step by step and check the comprehension thoroughly.

Do not accumulate or combine questions.

Listen to the validators carefully and provide feedback.

Always, make it clear that the validation process does not put the validator to test. It is the other way around. The validator is putting the material to the test.

Slide 12

Furthermore, you may want to ask the validators to read the text or a word out loud. Some words can be easy to understand yet difficult to read. The validators might have trouble reading them out loud.

Opt for easy to read synonyms, if possible. By hearing the text out loud,

you might discover additional loops, such as, for example, too many words in a line, or redundant words.
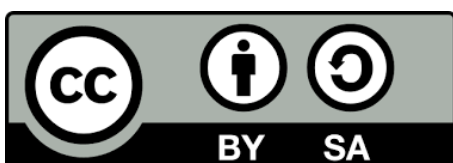
Slide 13

Our final word of advice is to turn to other units for additional lectures and samples if you want to learn more about the validation process and communication.

Slide 14

This concludes our video lecture. If you have any questions or comments regarding the content, please contact me through email. The email address is tatjana@risa.si.

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