UTS
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

UTS:HELPS

HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION SUPPORT

SEMINAR PRESENTATION

INTENSIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Higher Education Language & Presentation Support (HELPS)

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Intensive Academic Program: Seminar Presentation

Objectives

In this workshop, you will learn how to:

- select relevant information
- organise material
- choose a speaking style appropriate to the situation
- use appreciative language
- express yourself clearly and audibly
- use appropriate non-verbal communication when speaking
- use audiovisual aids to support the presentation
- deliver an effective presentation
- contribute to a group presentation
- deal with difficult situations
- evaluate your own performance.

At the end of the workshop, go back to these objectives and self-assess your capabilities.

1. Introduction

This booklet will help you to develop the communication skills and confidence you need to make a presentation. At the end of this program, you should be able to deliver an efficient and effective presentation with confidence.

ACTIVITY

You can develop your own good presentation habits by observing other people's presentations, both good and bad. Observing bad presentations will help you to avoid getting into some bad habits.

What makes a good/bad speaker? Discuss this with the person next to you, and then share your views with the class.

A good speaker:

A bad speaker:

ACTIVITY

What makes a good/bad presentation? Discuss this with the person next to you, and then share your views with the class.

A good presentation:

A bad presentation:

ACTIVITY

Introducing a colleague

Find someone in the room whom you don't know and interview them. Find out their name, what they are studying and their previous experience in making presentations. If there is time, you might also like to find out their first language or home country, and what they hope to gain from undertaking this intensive course. It is a good idea to write down some facts and to learn how to correctly pronounce the person's name.

Introduce this person to the class using a creative introduction such as:

'Buongiorno, which many of you will know is Italian for 'hello' or 'greetings', and it is Italy where ... is from ...'

Or

'Vietnam, a land of beauty in every way, where … was born ...'

Or

'It is my pleasure to introduce you to someone who is studying something that may one day change how we all live. … is a student of …'

Or

'I am very pleased to introduce you to … who is currently writing a paper on … '

Then, conclude on a positive note and avoid saying something like 'That's all' or 'I've finished'. Here are some positive suggestions for a conclusion to your introduction:

'So please welcome ... to our program.'

Or

'I'm sure we will see and hear more of what … is writing about in his/her thesis.'

Or

'With his/her experience in …, I'm certain that … will be a valuable member of our class.'

Or

'I'm sure you will see … around the UTS campus.'

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2. Types of presentations

The prepared presentation

The prepared speech is planned and organised before a presentation. You will need to prepare an outline and notes to prompt you. If you use the prompts well, the delivery will appear spontaneous and relaxed. Before making any type of prepared speech, it is important to consider the purpose of your presentation and the audience (more about that later in this book).

As you prepare your speech, put important ideas, phrases, quotations and statistics in note form. It is not essential to write down every word of the speech unless you are really nervous. To sound natural, try to add some extra comments when you present your speech.

Try not to read the speech word for word – you may lose your place, and reading is boring for your audience. If you can speak without reading, you can maintain eye contact with your audience and you can keep an eye on their response to your presentation.

Two useful aids are PowerPoint speaker notes and palm cards.

The prepared speech is the focus of this program as it is the most common form of presentation in an academic context.

PechaKucha 20X20

'PechaKucha 20X20 is a simple presentation format where you show 20 images, each for 20 seconds. The images advance automatically and you talk along to the images.' (PechaKucha 2014, para. 1)

For more information, see: http://www.pechakucha.org/faq. You can also watch past presentations on this site and the *Presentation of the Day*.

Giving an introduction

Introductions are a part of many academic presentations (Reinhart 2002). We may introduce ourselves or perhaps our fellow students who may all be taking part in the same presentation. You may also be required to introduce a speaker at a seminar or conference.

Making an impromptu speech

The impromptu speech is unexpected and is delivered without preparation. Some impromptu speeches are delivered at special occasions, or are courtesy speeches such as welcomes, introductions and acknowledgements.

As the occasion for a speech usually takes you by surprise, it is important to think clearly, analyse the situation quickly, and speak briefly and to the point. A way to make these sorts of speeches is to keep to the following order:

- clearly indicate the reason for the speech
- explain its relevance to the organisation or audience
- conclude with some of the characteristics of the individual or organisation receiving recognition.

Making a presentation at a team briefing

Briefings and oral reports are most often used for staff meetings, customer contacts, and reports to supervisors and managers on progress, results or problems. Whatever the purpose of your briefing, it is often appropriate to give your audience a short memo or written summary. People are more likely to remember communication that combines both spoken and written forms.

Making a presentation at a business meeting

Speaking at business meetings needs to be very well prepared. You may wish to use PowerPoint or Prezi, but check in advance to see if the necessary equipment is available. You may need to provide your own. You need to know who the audience is, where they work, and what they already know.

If you are meeting with an external audience, you will need to have a very well-prepared presentation with a clear opening. End with a clear statement of what you are seeking. Thank them for listening and leave plenty of time for questions.

Using a podcast to make a presentation

Podcasts supplement conference calls, training courses, briefings and other group communication activities. The shared experience of members of a podcast or blog happens in a virtual world rather than in a shared physical space.

You can speak well in a podcast presentation by emphasising common ground in terms of experiences, interest, values and goals between yourself and the audience.

Presenting yourself at job interviews

Preparation time for this type of presentation may take from two to four weeks. Answer questions in a calm manner. Look at the person who has asked the question, but if it is an interview panel, also look at other members of the panel. When asked if you have any questions, keep them simple and ask about future plans, or internal courses or opportunities for career development.

ACTIVITY

You will be shown a TED presentation. As you watch the presentation, answer the following questions:

a. What do you think is the purpose of this presentation?

b. Who is the audience? Do you think the speaker knows the audience?

c. Tick off those qualities as you see them demonstrated in the speaker's presentation:

☐ Good, clear carrying voice
☐ Confidence
☐ Knowledge of subject
☐ Well-organised information
☐ Eye contact with audience
☐ Related to audience's experience
☐ Sincerity
☐ Enthusiasm
☐ Good use of language
☐ Persuasiveness
☐ Good sense of timing
☐ Used humour and personal anecdotes
☐ Attention-gaining techniques
☐ Natural progression of ideas
☐ Gauging audience attention
☐ Vitality of personality

d. What is it that you liked about the presenter?

e. What made the presentation interesting?

ACTIVITY

Go to the PechaKucha 20X20 website (http://www.pechakucha.org/) and watch the *Presentation of the Day*. How skilful is the presenter in talking along with the images as they advance automatically?

ACTIVITY

Prepare a one-minute presentation in the PechaKucha 20X20 style. You are required to have three slides and talk for 20 seconds about each slide.

3. Preparing for a presentation

3.1 Purpose

Generally, presentations fall into two categories:

- **to inform** – to deliver facts; for example, to deliver a report
- **to persuade** – to try and change some aspect of your audience's behaviour. For example, you may want them to buy into your plans; to give money/resources; or to change direction regarding a project. In this type of presentation, it is essential that you clearly state what the benefits are.

Your presentation purpose/objective will help you throughout the presentation process – from the early stages when you are thinking about the audience and researching your topic to the final moments when you are closing your talk (Russell & Munter 2011, p. 34).

To arrive at the purpose of your academic presentation, you will need to:

- select the topic – if you are offered several topics, choose one that interests you
- analyse your topic for key/content words, limit/boundary words and direction words
- ensure that you have fully understood the presentation requirements and assessment criteria.

3.2 Planning

The more time spent in planning, the fewer things can go wrong.

Proper
Planning
Prevents
Poor
Performance

At the planning stage, you need to establish the context or setting in which the presentation will be given. Then you are able to design a presentation that is relevant to the specific task and audience. You need to pay attention to:

- the subject matter – know your 'stuff'. Familiarity with the topic and the material you are presenting gives you confidence and helps to give your audience confidence in you
- the organisation of your presentation – it must be organised in a way that holds the audience's attention, and is easy to follow
- your relationship with your audience – a speaker who can quickly establish rapport with the audience has a head start when it comes to making a successful presentation
- how you are feeling – if you suffer from nerves, you need to tame these so that they help you rather than hinder you when you give your presentation.

ACTIVITY

There are several things audiences hate. Complete the table to show how planning can avoid these.

Audience questions	**Using preparation to avoid this**
What is this supposed to be about?	Clear statement of purpose at the beginning
Who are they talking to? I know all this...	
How long is this PowerPoint?	
Why is their voice so monotonous?	
How does this point relate to the one before? Where are we going with this?	
I can't relate to the presenter – they don't even look at me!	
Is this true? What makes them right?	Collect evidence to support your ideas
Why aren't we stopping? We were supposed to be finished 15 minutes ago	
Why does the presenter think I would find that funny?	

3.3 Considerations

3.3.1 The context and the setting

Acknowledge the context or situation by preparing and delivering your presentation in a manner appropriate to that situation. The context may be an informal gathering of colleagues or a very formal public presentation. It is important to take this into account.

3.3.2 Know the audience

The audience is your first consideration when planning a presentation. Whatever kind of presentation you are going to give, there are several questions about your audience to which you must have the answers:

- Who is the audience?
- What is their professional background?
- What is their cultural background?
- How many people will be present?
- What do they already know about the content of your presentation?
- Do they want to be there?
- What do they want the information for?
- Will people be entering or leaving the room while you are presenting?

3.3.3 Know the venue

You will feel more relaxed with the surroundings if you are familiar with the venue. Arrive early to test out all the equipment, and check the seating arrangements to ensure that the audience can see you from all parts of the room. You might need to rearrange the furniture to suit your plans and needs, e.g. if you want the audience members to engage in small group discussions.

Before your presentation, find out:

- the location of the venue
- the available equipment (e.g. computer/laptop, data projector, whiteboard, microphone)
- the number of people the room can accommodate
- the seating arrangements.

3.4 Research and gather information

Research and investigation are necessary to find facts and supporting evidence (Majkut & Al-Mahmood n.d.). When conducting research:

- use key words from the topic; conduct a library and/or online search on these.
- use reliable publications (e.g. journal articles), suitable audiovisual materials, etc.
- record all the reference details when you make notes.

If your topic is too broad or extensive, then you might need to narrow the focus and choose a few main aspects/issues to cover in detail. It is important that your presentation does not exceed the allocated time.

3.5 Structure

3.5.1 Identify your main ideas

As you plan and organise your material, focus on the main purpose of your speech. As your audience has only one chance to hear you, put your ideas into a logical order so that they are easy to follow and understand. Check that they link together and that they cover everything your audience needs to know. Organise your speech into an outline that both highlights the main ideas and presents them clearly and logically for your audience. The success of your presentation depends on two parties, the presenter and the receiver, mutually acknowledging its purpose and responding appropriately.

A great way to gather your ideas together and sort them into a framework is a mind map. A mind map is a visual thinking and planning tool that helps you create a map of your thoughts on the page.

ACTIVITY

Look at a sample of a mind map on the Internet:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Guru_Mindmap.jpg

Watch a video about mind mapping with Tony Buzan:
http://members.optusnet.com.au/charles57/Creative/Mindmap/

Learn how to draw a mind map:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2paRXMKefQ&feature=player_embedded

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8_H42Z9wxA&feature=related

3.5.2 Apply a structure

A presentation has an introduction, body and conclusion, and is usually followed by a question-and-answer (Q&A) session. The presentation may include visual aids or handouts for the audience to take away.

3.5.2.1 Introduction

The introduction can motivate your audience and is a very important part of your presentation. It requires you to be energetic and if you are, your audience will sense the energy. Greet the audience with a 'Good morning/afternoon/evening' and introduce yourself. Don't weaken your opening by explaining that you hate presenting in public and that you are nervous.

The introduction must orient the audience to your subject and purpose. To capture interest and set up a rapport, tell the audience what to expect. Be sure to carefully define the central point (or thesis) that is the basis of your talk, and to ensure your supporting argument or information relates closely to it.

Ask yourself: What result do I want from the presentation? In planning your presentation, begin with a point that you want to cover which is achievable. Can you get people where you want to take them if you start with this point? If not, think of another starting point. Now work out where you are going to go with this point and give the audience a reason for wanting to go there.

When you know what your audience wants, you can write your introduction.

For example: **"This program will help you confidently and professionally present information to your colleagues and supervisors."**

An introduction ideally should capture the audience's interest. Explain to your audience what they are going to gain from the presentation, tell them how long the presentation will take, provide an opportunity for questions and outline what the presentation is going to be about. An easy way to remember this is INTRO (Mountain 2007):

I – Capture the audience's interest (interest)

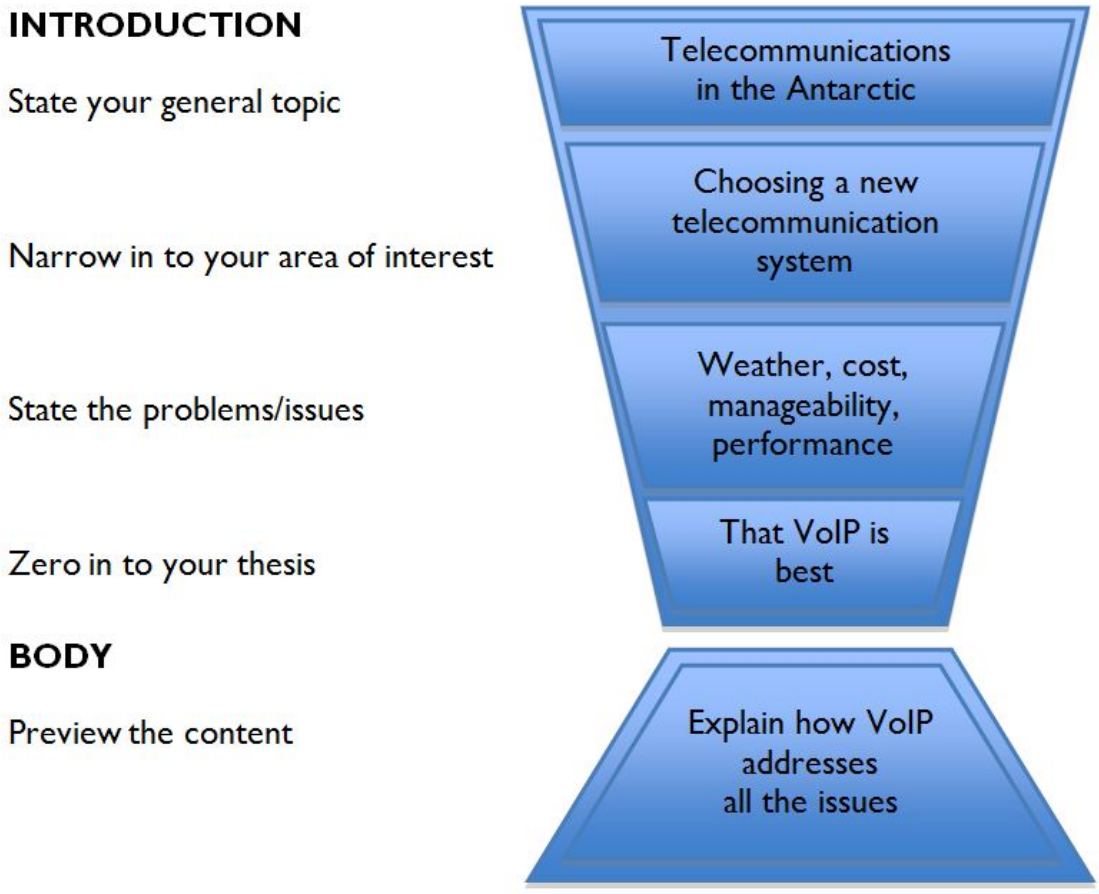
N – Explain why the presentation is important (need)

T – Tell how long the presentation will take (time)

R – Provide an opportunity for questions (response)

0 – Outline what the training session is about (outcomes)

Here is a suggested format for an introduction to an academic presentation or seminar:



ACTIVITY

Practise **INTRO** and then make an **INTRO** presentation to the class.

3.5.2.2 Body

The body of the presentation should fulfill the promises of purpose and information made in the introduction.

Structure is crucial. Whether you organise information by chronology, priority or theme, the body of your talk must proceed logically with the main points addressed one by one; with concise and relevant supportive evidence; statistics or examples; and verbal 'signposting' your progress through your argument or report.

You could present each important idea or point several times in different ways because a *listening* audience needs several opportunities to fully absorb meaning. Consider including shorter sentences that you would for a written text, again to assist the audience in comprehending what you are saying.

You need to clearly state the links between your ideas, and always signal when the next point is coming. If you think something is particularly important, say so and explain why.

If your presentation is not based on a written assignment, it will help to think of your main points as paragraph topic sentences, each of which needs to be followed by supporting sentences and a conclusion:

- expand the main points in sequence
- use supporting evidence
- use examples that will interest your audience, or those that they can relate to
- use audiovisual aids to draw the audience's attention to the salient points
- use expressions that make it easy for your audience to follow the structure of the presentation (Majkut & Al-Mahmood n.d.). There are some examples in the chart *Staging the body of your talk* on the next page.

Ensure that each of the points you make within your presentation are directly related to the overall purpose of your talk. This will ensure that your audience will be able to identify your main argument. Sequence your points logically and ensure that you firstly state your main points generally, and then give details and examples to illustrate these main points to your audience. After you have finished writing your speech, remember to read back over it and check that the information flows logically and is linked effectively (UQ Student Services 2012).

The content should be relevant and interesting. Your audience will retain knowledge better if they can relate to the content and when they take part in the presentation. This could be in the form of questions, a group discussion, brainstorming or assisting with a demonstration.

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Staging the body of your talk

Function	**Examples of signpost language**
Begin the body of the talk	The first point I would like to address is … Let me first raise …
Develop the first point	For example … This is especially important because …
Sum up the first point	So, we can see that …
Introduce the second point	Secondly, I'd like to turn to …
Develop the second point	An important statistic in this area is … It means that …
Sum up the second point	It's evident that …
Bring in the final point	Finally, we need to look at …
Develop the final point	This situation exists because … It's worth noting that …
Sum up the final point	Thus, the result is …
Emphasising a point	I'd like to stress that … Let me repeat that …
Introducing a contrasting idea	By the way … Incidentally …
Sum up the body of the talk and remind listeners of the topic	To summarise … To review, we have found that … What I have been saying is that …

Handing over to a co-presenter

Your talk may be a group presentation with two or more speakers. You need to manage the handover gracefully, for example:

I would like to conclude my discussion/report at this point and hand over to my partner/colleague XYZ who will examine/discuss/report the area/topic/perspective of …

You will learn more about group presentations in Section 5.

3.5.2.3 Conclusion

Similar to a written assignment, the conclusion again states your main points and what has been learned or shown, but you also may raise implications inherent in the findings and offer creative recommendations:

- use expressions such as 'In conclusion …' or 'To sum up …'
- summarise the main points
- draw some implications
- evaluate the importance of these implications
- end with a final statement referring to the topic. (Majkut & Al-Mahmood n.d.)

It is important that you don't include any new information in your conclusion. This is the time to reinforce your main ideas and link them back to the objective/purpose of your presentation.

Staging the conclusion

Function	**Example of signpost language**
Signal the end of your talk is coming Remind the audience again of the topic	In conclusion, we have examined the question that …
Remind the audience of your argument	We discussed …
Remind the audience of your findings	The evidence shows that …
Alert the audience that you have thought deeply about the topic	An important implication is …

Offer an innovative, thought-provoking idea to take away	I would like to offer recommendations to address this. Firstly … Secondly …
Signal the end of your talk	Thank you for your time and attention today.
Signal the question/discussion session	I'd now like to open the floor for questions and discussion.

3.5.2.4 Q & A

Don't just prepare for the time you'll be speaking, also think about the interactive moments when the audience will be asking questions:

- decide when to take questions. You can take questions at the end of the talk or have people ask them throughout
- think of a question as a compliment. When someone asks a question or shares a comment, think of it as a compliment – that they have taken an interest in your presentation. Adopting this attitude will help you create the right tone for Q&A
- anticipate what the audience will ask and practise a few different responses.

(Russell & Munter 2011, p. 67)

ACTIVITY

What are the advantages and disadvantages of (a) holding questions for the end, and (b) taking questions throughout? Which of the two do you prefer? Why?

3.6 Resources

There is a wide range of resources available to help us deliver a more effective and interesting presentation. Resources add variety and help maintain the audience's interest and attention (Mountain 2007).

The resources you use will depend on:

- size of the group
- time constraints
- the participants
- support services available

- location of the presentation
- the size and shape of the venue
- your own preference for using certain resources.

ACTIVITY

What are some resources we could use? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these resources?

Resources/equipment	Advantage	Disadvantage

ACTIVITY

(a) See how a smart board works: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjBhPvmsa-8&feature=related. What kind of presentation would benefit from the use of a smart board?

(b) Introduction to Prezi. Go to the Prezi *Learn & Support* webpage (https://prezi.com/support/) to see how it works, and then get started with Prezi.

3.6.1 Tips for using PowerPoint and Prezi

To ensure that you cater for all types of learners in your presentation and to keep your audience interested, it is helpful to put some thoughts into visual aids. It is important that all visuals complement your oral presentation and that they are interesting, legible and convey only the necessary information (UQ Student Services 2013). To do this, you need to:

- use an appropriate font. Some fonts can be easier to read than others. It is best to avoid cursive or uppercase font as these can be harder for your audience to read
- use an appropriate font size. It is important to remember that your audience is sitting some distance from the screen and, therefore, will have difficulty reading anything written in less than 18 point font
- know your slide boundaries. Your audience cannot read text that runs off the screen or that is covered by borders or images. Be aware of your text and whether it fits within the borders of your slide
- make only one key point per slide
- not have a page full of numbers. When presenting statistics, consider using graphs or charts
- limit text. The old saying 'a picture is worth a thousand words' is none so true when presenting information orally to an audience. It can be useful to limit text and use graphic (e.g. pictures and graphs) to present information. Your audience will respond better to slides that deliver information quickly, and graphics are a great way of doing this
- use colours cautiously. Be aware of the colours you choose. It is best to stick to a theme of 2-3 colours and preferably choose either dark backgrounds and light text or light backgrounds and dark text. Colours can look different on LCD projectors than they do on your computer screen, so give your presentation a trial run to check. Avoid overly bright or fluorescent colours
- avoid long titles. It is important that titles summarise only the main point from the slide. Titles are meant to reinforce the idea that you are aiming to communicate and it is important that they do this in a succinct fashion.

There is no rule about how many slides you should use if you are using PowerPoint or Prezi. Keep the word count down and the graphics high. The kind of slide that turns an audience off is the one where extensive words are read out. What works best is visualising the message.

Once you have prepared your slides, it is time for some brutal review. It is important not to go overboard on slides. Too many means less impact on your audience. Every slide must serve a useful purpose by adding to the quality of your presentation by providing greater clarity and understanding.

ACTIVITY

Watch *PowerPoint Tips and Tricks for Business Presentation*s with David Diskin on Lynda.com: UTS Library > Lynda.com > login > Search for *PowerPoint Tips and Tricks for Business Presentations*.

Apart from the tips and tricks in the videos, what other do's and don'ts can you think of when using a presentation tool such as PowerPoint or Prezi?

ACTIVITY

Create a short PowerPoint presentation on a topic (to be discussed in class).

3.6.2 YouTube or DVDs

If you are going to use YouTube or DVDs in your presentation:

- use them as a trigger to generate discussion
- outline the content
- state how long it will take to view.

3.7 Time management

You will need to manage your time during the presentation so you can get your full message across, so don't finish before or after your allocated time.

To help you manage your time, prepare a Running Sheet for the presentation. Include on this sheet your starting time, the body of events (including tea, lunch breaks) and a closing time. Rehearse the presentation several times, keeping an eye on the time.

3.8 Practice

Practice is something we have to do if we want to achieve a good public speaking experience. Many people don't practise much and they are the ones who forget what comes next, who go over time, and who look unprofessional. If you cut corners and try to 'wing it', your lack of practice will be obvious to your audience.

As you write your presentation, say your sentences out loud. Do they make sense? Do the graphics fit with the words?

Small cards are very useful. Put one heading on each card and put a few words down under each heading. Talk yourself through the presentation moving from card to card to see if it makes sense and is logical.

Use a timer to see if you can fit your talk into the time you have been given.

By practising extensively, you will embed the main points in your head and you will remember the flow when it comes time to give the real talk.

ACTIVITY

Work in groups for this exercise.

1. Each person in the group writes down two topics for a speech on a card or small piece of paper. Choose any appropriate subject, such as your favourite sport or pastime, a pet hate or the power of the media.

2. Shuffle the cards and place them face down. Each member of the group in turn selects a card and gives an impromptu 2-minute speech on either of the two topics listed on it. As you speak, follow the preparation formula.

ACTIVITY

Prepare a three-minute presentation on a topic of your choice. The chosen topic should be relevant to your discipline. You are free to use any available equipment/resources at your disposal. You will be delivering your presentation in front of the class, and it will be followed by a Q&A session. The presentation may be recorded for feedback purposes.

4. Delivering a presentation

Skills in making presentations will last you all your life. Whether you are giving a presentation at work, giving an account of yourself at an interview, making a speech at a wedding or speaking up at a public meeting, they will help you to say what you want to say, clearly and persuasively.

4.1 General tips on making a presentation

- Make the audience feel welcome and at ease, and allow them to relax.

- Keep smiling. The excitement starts the minute you get out of your seat. Walk very confidently towards the area where you will be speaking. Catch the eye of all sections of your audience – left, centre, right.

- If you do not have a microphone, get the audience's attention through eye contact – face the audience, stand and smile, gradually the audience will come around. Begin only when you have their complete attention. Be positive in your opening remarks – make no apologies, show no weaknesses. Your first words should be firm and decisive. For example, 'Good morning ladies and gentlemen: thank you for your attention; my name is ... I would like to outline the format for today's session, but first a little bit of housekeeping ...'

- If you have a microphone, tap the mike – don't breathe into it. Say: 'Good morning' or 'Thank you', and repeat if necessary. Wait for silence before addressing the audience. Just standing and facing the audience may be sufficient to get their attention.

- Appreciate the importance of your initial contact with the group. At the start of the speech, try very consciously to slow down. The ultimate purpose of any speech is to communicate your message to your audience. Avoid bookish language or technical jargon, and use natural words and phrases. The expression 'less is more' applies. A good speech delivers the whole story, but in a manner that is quick, clear and easy to understand.

- Engage your audience and maintain their attention by dropping in a few anecdotes and using practical examples to illustrate a point. This will make it easier for them to understand complex issues and remember what it is that you have said.

- Vary voice pitch and character to complement and emphasise points, speaking slowly and clearly.

- Much communication comes through body language. Keep your feet firmly grounded with your legs shoulder-width apart and arms comfortably by your side. Gesture with your head, arms and hands to emphasise points, but avoid over exaggeration and distractions. Dress appropriately, as physical appearance shapes first impressions.

- Eye contact is an essential element of good public speaking. This simple tool works wonders on the audience – by engaging their attention at the start of the speech and securing their interest and respect throughout.

- Use a laser pointer to point out words or visuals you want to emphasise. Try to avoid keeping it on for long periods. Aim the laser at the foot of the slide and then draw a line up to the word you wish to highlight.

4.2 Non-verbal communication

People make judgements about you in the first few minutes that they see you – not only by what you say but also how you appear. Your audience is looking at you all the time, so grooming and presentation are extremely important. You will never get a second chance to make a good first impression! There are two appearance points to remember:

- smile – it's an outward sign of inner confidence. Look pleased to be there, and begin your opening remarks confidently
- grooming – dress for the occasion and to suit the client group.

4.2.1 Body language

Before your presentation, decide where you will stand for the presentation. Position yourself so you can see everyone but don't stay on one side of the room; change sides from time to time. If you are using a lectern to support your notes, stand beside it. Think about your audience, and where and how they will be able to see you. If you are one of a few people making a presentation, confidently walk up to the front of the room displaying a positive attitude, look your audience in the eye and smile.

The spoken word is only a small part of the communication process. The words we use make up 10% of the message. The way we present those words make up 35% of the message. Our body language makes up 55% of the message. With this in mind, pay attention to your own mannerisms and be aware of your listener's body language too. Avoid putting up barriers to your audience. Have an open stance. Do not cross your arms; this gives a closed-off negative feeling.

A general rule is the larger the audience, the larger the gestures, and more pronounced the body language. Rise to the occasion!

4.2.2 Posture

The way people stand or sit during their presentation can make their audience calm and responsive, or anxious and unsettled.

ACTIVITY

To get ready for delivering your knockout presentation, practise the following in small groups or pairs. Provide feedback to each other about how successful you were in communicating a positive and relaxed image through your body language.

- Prior to standing to speak, pause for a moment. Take a breath, and feel your feet on the ground.
- Rise from your seat and walk to the spot where you are to present from. Do so in a calm and confident manner.
- Face the audience, standing on the floor with your feet about the same distance apart as your hips. Maintain a relaxed and balanced stance throughout.
- Relax your shoulders, arms and hands. Be aware of not fidgeting, as this can be distracting.
- Make sure your head is centrally balanced.

- Using eye contact, connect with the audience for a moment.
- Take a breath and smile, and then deliver your first line.
- Now practise calmly and confidently returning to your seat.

4.2.3 Your hands

They are one of the best tools you have when presenting. They can be by your side, in front of you, or wherever you feel comfortable.

Don't plan your gestures; let them happen naturally. They reflect your personality. However, be mindful that your hands don't move about in a way that would be distracting for the audience.

4.2.4 Eye contact

Eye contact lays the groundwork for trust between you and your audience. Eighty per cent of human communication is non-verbal. Don't look to the back wall. Maintain eye contact and try to look at everyone at least once, but it has to be brief, moving around different parts of the room.

Keeping eye contact with your audience:

- involves them in the communication process
- gives you information as to whether they are understanding what you are saying
- helps you recognise if people are amicable towards you as a presenter.

Having eye contact with your audience shows that you are interested in them. You want to let them know you are interested in addressing them, and you also want to know what they think of what you are saying. You can only know their response by looking at them. This is the beginning of developing rapport.

Getting eye contact from a speaker can have quite an impact on people. However, there can be too much eye contact sometimes, especially if the speaker focuses only on one or two audience members throughout a presentation. It needs to be spread around the audience.

How will you know if your speech is not working? You can tell by observing the body language of the audience. Are they absolutely still and leaning forward in their seats to hear every word? Or are they restless, looking away, talking among themselves or even asleep? When you address small groups, you will need to look at their eyes and facial expressions. For larger groups, their posture and movement are more obvious. However, you won't know any of this unless you look at the audience. If you hold eye contact with them, they will feel you are speaking directly to them. To keep this eye contact, you will have to know your content material well enough to speak without checking your notes.

If you are addressing a small audience of say four people (e.g. in a job interview), you will need to notice each person's response. On the other hand, you don't have to look at every person in a large audience. Observe someone on the left side, in the middle and on the right side, and look at each person a number of times. With practice, you will find you can look at many people and be aware of their responses in a large audience.

ACTIVITY

1. How will you know if your audience feels positive about your presentation? What are some examples of positive body language or positive responses from your audience?

2. What are some examples of negative body language or negative responses from the audience if they are losing interest in your presentation?

3. What can you do to recapture their attention and interest?

4.3 Verbal communication

Your voice is one of your most important presentation tools. Use it to deliver content which is clear, meaningful and easily heard by your audience. Your audience shouldn't have to work hard to understand what you are saying. Use your voice to engage your audience and convince them that you have something worthwhile and interesting to say. If you don't address your audience, if you don't speak clearly with confidence and commitment, and if you don't project your voice, your audience will lose interest in what you are saying.

4.3.1 Pronunciation tips for presenters

Get physical

Do some 'warm-ups' to loosen up your mouth and your tongue before you speak. You can move and stretch your mouth, and practise by repeating tricky words and sounds. Doing this will help you to overcome the physical 'stiffness' of the articulators and to speak fluently and clearly.

Get passionate

Focus on your content. You will speak with meaning and commitment and lose your nerves because you are so 'into' your topic. Your interest in your topic will transfer to your audience.

Give your audience time to take in what you are saying

You can do this by pausing at the end of word groups and information chunks. Pausing is important for listeners because they need time to absorb information. Pausing also gives you, the presenter, time and 'space' to stress key words and use intonation signals.

However, too much pausing or stopping at the end of each word or couple of words can make you sound hesitant and lacking in confidence. It also makes every word carry too much meaning. English speakers get meaning across by stressing key words in information chunks.

Give your audience a sense of direction

Don't lose your audience in a forest of words. A presentation is like a journey. Take your audience with you.

Signal new topics and sections of your presentation by:

- pausing
- starting on a higher pitch level
- stressing the key words such as signposting words and the topic word/s of your new section.

Let your audience know when information is finished or not by using:

- rising intonation (↗) to indicate unfinished information
- falling intonation (↘) to signal finished information.

ACTIVITY

Read the sentence below and then say it again with different intonations.

I thought you would never get here.

Make the sentence sound:

- relieved
- angry
- sarcastic
- happy
- sad.

Let your audience know what's important

Present essential information clearly by stressing key words. In English, new information usually occurs towards the end of a speech chunk or sentence. Breathe evenly and keep your voice steady so you can stress those crucial words at the end.

Get the basics right

Make sure that you can pronounce key vocabulary, data, names and acronyms clearly and accurately. To do this:

- check the stress in poly-syllabic (multi-syllabic) words – use a dictionary or ask a competent English speaker if you are not sure. Practise difficult vocabulary
- identify and practise problem sounds, particularly in high frequency words and key words in your presentation.

Rehearse and reflect

Nothing beats practice! It's amazing what glitches you will find in a presentation as soon as you start rehearsing. Prior to the presentation day, make sure that you have practised presenting your notes several times, using the notes that you plan to use on the day. Doing so is very beneficial for increasing your familiarity and ease with the material.

Practise your presentation standing up and imagine yourself in the situation. Rehearse:

- your opening. When you start your presentation, you're likely to feel nervous so it's helpful to know exactly what you're going to say to open your presentation, where you will pause, what words you will stress, and the intonation you will use
- topic sentences and signposting words when introducing new topics or making a topic change. This will make your transitions smooth and easy to follow
- the body of your presentation and your conclusion, including how you will refer to any visual aids as you move through your presentation.

Record yourself if possible and use a checklist to evaluate how effective you are. Better still, get someone to listen to you and give you feedback.

4.3.2 Using your voice

Think about your voice when you speak:

- Do you speak loudly or softly?
- Is your speech too fast or too slow?
- Are the words you use easy to understand?
- Is there a variety of rhythm, intonation, and word and sentence stress?

If it is possible, before your presentation, try speaking aloud in the room or lecture theatre.

You will need to adjust the volume of your voice to suit the environment. If you are naturally loud, you have an advantage because you know people will hear you. If you are speaking to a small group, watch the reaction of your audience and then you will know whether your volume is correct. Use your voice to help your audience feel they want to listen to you. If your face lights up, your tone of voice will be bright and positive.

4.3.3 Speed of speech

Don’t talk so quickly that the audience can’t keep up with what you are saying, or so slowly that you are losing their interest.

ACTIVITY

Try reading the following passage (Harmer 2007, p.38) which contains 100 words so that you speak for one full minute. This will help you feel how it is to speak at a slower rate for better retention.

One of the ways we recognise people is by the pitch of their voice. We say that one person has a very high voice whereas another has a deep voice. When their voice is very high, we talk about them having a 'high-pitched' voice.

While most of us have a pitch that we normally operate at, in times of tension, for example, the pitch of our voices may change dramatically. We often speak at a higher pitch than normal if we are frightened or excited. When we are tired, bored or fed-up, our pitch may be lower than is customary.

Speakers who don't look at their audience soon become boring. Train yourself to look at the audience. **Never speak or read aloud to an audience while looking down; only speak while looking up.**

ACTIVITY

Read the following sentences, but only speak while you are looking up.

1. In some cultures, it is a sign of respect not to have eye contact with one's elders.

2. In the Australian workplace, to avoid eye contact can appear to be dishonest or disrespectful.

3. Any group of people you are addressing will feel more involved with your topic if you look at their faces while you are speaking to them.

4.3.4 Intonation

Intonation refers to the way your voice goes up and down as you speak. We use intonation to give emphasis and variety, and to express our feelings about a topic (see 4.3.1).

4.3.5 Clear enunciation

When you articulate your words clearly, your listeners will understand you better, especially if you speak at the right speed for them and you don't mumble into your papers with your head down. Watch the audience for signs of puzzlement. Repeat the key points in a different way if you think they were not understood. This is part of gaining audience rapport.

Many people worry that their accents may make them difficult to understand. Sometimes, this does happen; however, you can guard against that by practising speaking at a fairly slow speed and by listening to your own speech on a recording. In this way, any problem words can be identified and practised. You can ask a supportive friend to give you feedback on which words are difficult for listeners. The best thing to do is to vary pitch and intonation and to speak loudly enough and slowly enough for others to listen without effort.

There may be some people in your audience who have hearing disabilities. Make sure that you move your lips enough for them to lip read, and don't hide your mouth with your hand. Sometimes, lip readers or people with hearing impairment can find it difficult to understand speakers who have large moustaches.

4.3.6 Pauses

Why pause? There are a number of reasons:

- A pause gives the audience time to digest what you're saying.
- A pause can indicate a change of topic or direction.
- A pause can emphasise an important point or add drama.
- A pause gives you the chance to examine the audience's reactions.

ACTIVITY

Read the following paragraphs and put in the pauses (normally denoted by //) by highlighting the space where a pause should go. The first one has been done for you. Then read them aloud, making sure that you pause where indicated.

1. Internet shopping: a place for bargains or scams?

No more shopping trolleys! No more heavy parcels! No more cruising the car park! With the development of the Internet and the popularisation of computers, shopping on the Internet has become commonplace. However, despite being more convenient than traditional shopping, online shopping entails some risks. I believe these risks can be avoided if some simple measures are taken. Today I would like to bring to you the advantages and disadvantages of Internet shopping and discuss some of the security measures you need to take to avoid the pitfalls. I will start by outlining the advantages, go on to describe some of the pitfalls and conclude by offering some advice on secure Internet shopping.

2. A healthy life

Good evening everybody…104 years old! That seems old, doesn't it? But today, with improved health care and access to information about health, centenarians are becoming more numerous. Will you live to a hundred, or even 90? Well, I'd like to suggest that this depends on how you live your life. Your health will largely determine what your lifespan will be. Today, I would like to demonstrate how taking care of your health can lead to a longer and healthier life. I will begin by discussing mental health, then I will move on to physical health and I will conclude my presentation by talking about spiritual health. There will be time at the end of my presentation for questions.

4.4 Overcoming nerves

The secret to being a polished and professional presenter is to be yourself! Our personalities are what make us our own unique presenter. Don't try and project an image that is not you. It will come across false.

Use the space around you, move around, and don't stand on one spot. Make different points in different positions. Try to avoid standing behind tables as this gives a distant feeling. Do not sit down while presenting a point as this puts you on the same level as the audience and removes some authority you have over the group. Your enthusiasm and energy will reflect as a contagious, positive attitude and will set the tone for the rest of the presentation.

It is a good idea to involve the audience as early as possible to start the group bonding, and make the mood more relaxed.

Nerves play a big role in how we present ourselves. There are ways to combat these nerves. Remember, we sometimes work best if our adrenaline is running, so learn to welcome adrenaline and use it! It is good to be nervous but not to be overcome by nerves. You need to be in control. The best way to do this is to have the knowledge that you have planned and rehearsed your presentation very well. If you have done this, you will have confidence in your material.

Self-talk will help; thinking such things to yourself as 'I am well prepared and I can do this' allows adrenaline to flow but for you to still be in control. Here are some ideas of what you can say to yourself:

- 'I have good material.'
- 'I am looking forward to this presentation.'
- 'I have rehearsed this presentation well.'
- 'I can feel the nerves, they are a good thing and I am in control.'
- 'My audience will be supportive and friendly.'

Saying these mantras over and over can increase your confidence in your capability.

Your audience can get an idea of how you are feeling by looking at the way you walk. If you are feeling cheerful, your walk is tall and lively. If you are unhappy, your walk may be slower and you tend to look down. When you are making a presentation it is a good idea to act on these emotions by pretending that you are an actor in a play and the script requires you to be positive and cheerful. When you work at producing a positive emotion, the emotion starts to feel real.

Nerves also help you to build rapport with your audience who may sense your nervous tension and because of this, may want you to do well. An audience does not mind if you are nervous so long as you stay in control.

4.4.1 Breathing

When people are anxious, the first thing that they forget to do is breathe! Slow, deep breaths help calm nerves by ensuring blood flow and oxygen to the brain. These breaths also help you think and speak during presentations.

Five long, slow breaths before starting to speak will help you, always. It also ensures that you don't rush your first few words, as speakers generally speed up when they're nervous!

ACTIVITY

Here is an exercise to slow your heart rate and breathing, and relax some of the muscles associated with breathing. Choose a quiet room for this. The exercise is best done standing up. First, count aloud from one to five (take five seconds to do this) and then do the same thing in reverse. Do this two or three times to establish a rhythm. Now carry on counting silently, in your head, and as you do so breathe in slowly – filling your lungs with air – over that slow count from one to five, then breathe out again slowly as you count down from five to one. Try to get comfortably empty by one. Do this as many times as you can, up to ten times. As you become more accustomed to doing it, try to extend the count progressively to seven and then to ten.

4.4.2 Do not be afraid of your audience

Learn to read your audience; look at their faces and posture for signs. Are they interested or do you think they have switched off? The first sign is at the beginning when they enter the room. Do they look enthusiastic and happy to be there? Are there any outside influences that cause stress to the audience?

A few things to look for:

- If someone is trying to stifle a yawn, try and involve them by asking questions – get someone else to talk.
- If they are restless and moving around in their chairs, get them to take five minutes and do some stretching exercises, call a discussion time or a quick break.
- If a questioner has an unfriendly or hostile tone, remain calm; remember they could be passionate about the topic.
- Involve someone who may be shy or nervous, ask them a question that you know they will have the answer to, and then give them positive feedback.
- Do not maintain eye contact too long with any one person, it may make them uncomfortable.

4.4.3 Tips for building up self-confidence

1. Being prepared: the content aspect, e.g. overall plan; understanding all ideas; being able to refer to sources for explanation or further elucidation; knowing that the amount of content is adequate for the given time of the presentation.
2. Being prepared: the resources aspect, e.g. knowing what equipment is available on-site and how to use it; having at least two copies of your PowerPoint presentation at different locations (e.g. memory stick and email) in case one plays up; having all other resources (e.g. remote control and whiteboard markers) on hand.
3. Rehearse your presentation prior to delivery: however, it is important not to memorise it word-for-word. If possible, record your rehearsal and listen to it, seeking ways to develop smoothness/fluency.

4. Have a knowledge of the presentation space: where resources are located; limitations. Is there an opportunity to rehearse/practise in the space prior to the time of presentation?

5. Have a knowledge of the audience: background, motivation for attendance, knowledge level.

6. Immediately prior to the delivery of the presentation, ensure that you are in an appropriate state of mind – not too tense, not too relaxed. If too relaxed, focus on how the audience may react to your presentation; if too tense, relax with deep breathing, a glass of water, some quiet music. Begin the delivery in a positive frame of mind – that what you have to say is of value and that the audience will appreciate it.

7. A short time after your presentation, debrief: seek feedback from members of the audience and also personally recount the good as well as the not-so-good aspects of the presentation. Make note of aspects to improve upon for the next time. (ELSSA Centre 2010)

4.5 Handling discussions and the Q&A session

Whether questions and discussions are raised during your presentation or after it, you need to manage the audience strategically.

Ask the audience to keep their questions brief and confined to one or two points. If you receive a question you are confident to answer, thank the questioner, repeat or summarise the question in case others have not heard it clearly, and respond briefly.

Do not simply ask for questions. Have a moderately contentious point lined up to start the discussion if no-one in the audience speaks up. It could relate to your main message, something stressed in your presentation, an implication or a recommendation

Questions should be welcome; if the audience does not ask any, perhaps they don't understand what you are talking about. Questions are a good way to check if the audience is listening and understanding. It also involves your audience, which makes them feel that they are connected to you and the topic, and that they are contributing. Give some thought to what sort of questions your audience might ask, and practise your answers. This way, you will feel more confident if they are asked in real life. If you don't know the answer, admit it by saying something like: 'I'm sorry I don't have the information; I will look into it and get back to you'. Keep control of your audience and allow only one person to speak at a time.

4.5.1 Refine your listening skills

Look like a good listener by using various non-verbal behaviours to show your audience you are interested in their questions (Russell & Munter 2011):

- maintain a posture of involvement. Face the questioner. Avoid distracting hand or arm placements. Let your body language signal that you are listening intently
- make eye contact. Look at the questioner, observing their whole face so you can pick up any non-verbal cues
- create an environment suitable for listening. If appropriate, move away from the podium, closing the distance between you and the audience. Turn up the lights so the audience can be the focus of your attention.

Encourage participation by posing open-ended questions, being silent, and using small signals (Russell & Munter 2011):

- open the door for questions. Use open-ended questions that can't just be answered 'yes' or 'no'
- be silent: don't interrupt. After you've asked a question or invited the audience to participate in a Q&A session, give them time to think and collect their thoughts. Don't say anything while you wait. Also, be silent as you listen to their questions. If you interrupt, you won't hear the entire question, and you'll send a signal that you're rushing them
- use minimal encouragers. Consider using little cues which entice a speaker to continue – nodding, smiling, or saying 'uh huh'. As long as these signals are natural, they communicate that you are genuinely interested in listening to the question.

In active listening, a paraphrase is a brief statement that captures the essence of what someone has just said. If modified a bit, this listening tool can be a great asset when handling questions. Q&A

paraphrasing can help you control the interaction and enhance the value of Q&A for the audience (Russell & Munter 2011):

- keep everyone involved. If someone sitting in the front row asks a question, those at the back may not be able to hear it. Therefore, you need to repeat the question, or better yet, paraphrase it. By doing so, you make sure that everyone knows what was asked

- clarify what was asked. Questions can be hard to understand for many reasons. In these situations, a paraphrase can help you deal with the question (see 4.5.3)

- address emotions. Some questioners let you know explicitly how they feel. Others use only visual or vocal cues. In such cases, you want to paraphrase more than just the actual words. Acknowledge their emotions/feelings in your paraphrase by saying something like 'I recognise some of you are frustrated by … So let's get to the root of the question…'

- diffuse difficult situations. When you need time to think, paraphrasing can be a great stalling technique. It gives you a chance to gather your thoughts before you respond. Paraphrasing is also handy if you are battling hostile questioners (see 4.5.4).

4.5.2 Respond effectively

Effective responses help you accomplish your presentation purpose/objective (Russell & Munter 2011, p. 70):

- stay on the message. When you are asked a question, think of it as a chance to make your message heard. *Bridging* connects your response to something that is part of your presentation objective (e.g. '… which means …'), while *flagging* draws attention to your most salient point (e.g. 'what's essential to remember is …' or 'the critical point is …')

- balance brevity with interesting detail

- keep everyone involved. Paraphrasing the hard-to-hear questions is one way to keep everyone aware of what's being discussed. In addition, call on people from various parts of the room as you take questions. Don't just look at the questioner when you respond; focus on other audience members too.

4.5.3 Listen for and deal with challenging questions

Tough questions tend to fall into three categories: unclear questions, limiting questions and 'don't know' questions (Russell & Munter 2011, pp. 71-72).

4.5.3.1 Unclear questions

When a question is unclear and you have no idea what you've been asked, use an 'I' response rather than a 'you' response – 'I'm not sure I understand the question' rather than 'your question is confusing'. There are three common types of unclear questions:

- *Vague questions* use non-specific language (e.g. it, this, the other). Try to clarify your understanding with a paraphrase.

- *Long multi-questions* consist of a string of a few questions. You could (a) synthesise all the questions and provide a single response; (b) start with the questions you know/like best, avoiding the ones that you don't want to address; or (c) answer one part of the question and ask for a reminder of the remaining question.

- *Broad questions* involve huge issues that couldn't be dealt with in a limited time. Either narrow the focus or point out its broad nature and offer to address it later (e.g. after the presentation).

4.5.3.2 Limiting questions

Many types of questions seem to limit your options or lead you toward a response that you don't want to give:

- *Forced-choice questions* ask you to choose one out of a number of options (e.g. 'Which is more important – X or Y?'), or rank items on a scale. Reframe the questions and set the parameters.

- *Hypothetical questions* create a situation that doesn't exist, although it could be a potential reality. It's best to stick with what is known rather than focus on what might occur. Do not speculate unless you can make an informed response.

- *Empty-chair questions* ask you to comment on something said/written by someone not in the room. If you have no knowledge of the content, don't attempt to evaluate it.

- *Loaded-language questions* include colourful words and phrases. Neutralise the question by paraphrasing it.

- *False-premise questions* begin with an incorrect assumption. Correct the assumption before you provide the answer.

- *Distorted paraphrases* aren't questions. Rather, they are inaccurate summaries of what you had said. Don't ignore the remarks; correct them.

4.5.3.3 'Don't know' questions

If you don't know the answer, don't pretend that you do. Be honest and say 'I don't know', or suggest where the answer can be found. Or better yet, offer to get the answer yourself, then be sure to follow up. In other cases, you might just need a little time to gather your thoughts. If so, here are some stalling options:

- repeat or paraphrase the question

- turn the question outward by asking the questioner or the entire audience for their ideas/opinions

- write the question on the board so that you can discuss it as a group.

4.5.3.4 Difficult questions

Don't feel rattled by questions you can't answer easily. Here are some suggestions for formulating replies.

Function	Examples of language
Thank the questioner	Thank you for the question. That's a good question. Thank you for that.
Ensure everyone has heard the question	An audience member has put forward a question… The question was …
Seek clarification from the questioner	Could you say a little more about that?
Choose a strategy to give yourself time	That's something I'd like to give some thought to. I'd like to think about that.
Seek information from the audience and promote discussion	That's an interesting point. Would anyone like to comment/take that up?
Deal with several people trying to speak at one time; nominate the first and tell the others you will get to them	Thank you—this gentleman/lady first, and then your question next, and then …

4.5.4 Managing a discussion

Function	Examples of discussion language
Raise a starting point	An important perspective we should consider first is … What do people think about …? What if the result was …?

Give your opinion	As far as I'm concerned … I would say that … It's quite clear that … I think …
Agree	I take your point. I don't think any would disagree with that. That is logical. I'd go along with you on that.
Disagree	I can't say I share your view. I can't see how that can be. But it could be argued that …
Manage interruptions (you may also need to do this during your presentation)	Thank you. I was just coming to that. I plan to deal with that later. Can we leave that until discussion time? Thank you, but some other points need to come first.
Deal with a speaker whose comment is taking too long	I'm sorry, we're running out of time and I'll have to interrupt there. Thank you for your interesting comments. Does anyone else have a brief comment to make?
End the discussion	Thank you—I think we can say our discussion has emphasized that the most important points are… We can conclude that … I think we all agree that … As we wind up, let me thank you again for your time and attention.
Draw attention to your handout	Before you leave, please ensure you have a copy of my/our information sheet/flyer. Thank you again for coming.

4.5.5 Control difficult or hostile audience members

Occasionally, audience members may try to take control of the discussion, attack you or distract you in some way. If so, you need to control the situation without letting the confrontation get personal (Russell & Munter 2011, pp. 73-74).

Types of difficult questioners and audience members:

- those who ramble on and on, sometimes never even asking a question. To respond, listen intently so you can paraphrase something of value and then bridge to a message that gets you back on track
- those who focus on minutiae and take you off message. You can acknowledge that and explain you would like focus on say a global view rather than on specific data points during your talk
- those who use sarcasm and try to belittle you in some way. Don't retaliate. Just state your opinions calmly and clearly, using logical reasoning to back your views.

General tips for handling a hostile audience member:

- be polite, even to the rudest audience members. Of all the tips for handling difficult audience, being polite is the most important
- lessen hostility by agreeing to disagree and pointing to common ground
- paraphrase the feelings behind the question. If there's more to the message than the words alone indicate, acknowledge the questioner's emotions by noting the feelings (e.g. anger or frustration)
- stop repeat offenders tactfully, perhaps by putting up your hand and explaining 'I'm sorry to interrupt, but I want to make sure we end on time, so let me touch on the issue you mentioned by saying …'
- look elsewhere afterward. After responding, do not direct your eye contact toward the difficult questioner. If you do, you're just inviting the person to make another challenging comment.

5. Making an effective group presentation

The first requirement for producing a group presentation is that you work jointly as a team on your presentation. Your team may decide to appoint a co-ordinator. Each member might be assigned to a part of the group presentation but when put together, the presentation has to flow logically and cohesively. You need to have a common format for your slides and your handouts.

Think about how team members will be introduced and how you will manage the handover as one member ends his or her part of the presentation and hands over to the next. Also think about how you will end the presentation.

For example:

I would like to conclude my discussion/report at this point and hand over to my partner/colleague XYZ who will examine/discuss/report the area/topic/perspective of …

You will need to decide whether one member will introduce the other members or each team member will introduce himself or herself. It will help to have a particular phrase prepared to hand over to the next presenter.

Decide in advance whether your presentation as a whole will come to an end when the last presenter stops talking or whether one of you will provide a brief summary by way of rounding off your presentation.

5.1 How to prepare a group presentation

The Faculty of Engineering at Monash University (2013) offers the following advice in preparation for a group presentation.

1. Organise the structure of your presentation into the following sections:

   Introduction
   Middle sections
   Conclusion

2. Allocate sections to each speaker. Make sure that each speaker has approximately the same amount of information to report. Make sure the presentation is well balanced with:
   - each speaker speaking for about the same time
   - each speaker only speaking once.

3. Decide where visuals are needed and prepare these visuals. Make sure that your slides are effective:
   - keep the message punchy.
   - avoid long lists of equations and detailed technical information.
   - give every slide a title.

4. Prepare the talk. Make the language of your presentation formal enough. Avoid informal language and slang.

5. Prepare your notes.

6. Rehearse with the group. Check the structure. Check the timing. Check your delivery. Make any necessary changes and prepare the final version. Rehearse again.

5.2 Giving the presentation

1. Create a good impression and look professional:
   - set up chairs for each speaker
   - check equipment (projector, slides)
   - look enthusiastic.

2. Do not read from your full report:
   - It looks as if you are very badly prepared.
   - It turns the presentation into a reading exercise.
   - It is very hard to do it well.

3. Do not write detailed calculations on the board:
   - It is very boring for the audience.
   - It looks as if you are badly prepared.
   - It takes up too much time.

4. Avoid changing speakers more than you have to. Too many short sections make the presentation disjointed.

5. the first speaker should ALWAYS state the aim of the presentation and provide an overview of the structure of the presentation.

   For example: The aim of our presentation is to … There are three main parts to our presentation. First … Next … Finally …

6. Each speaker should ALWAYS clearly state the topic of their part of the presentation.

   For example: I am going to present an overview of our first design, outlining the dimensions, the construction method …

7. There should ALWAYS be a clear conclusion statement. Do not simply fade away!

   For example: In summary, the major advantages of our design are …

5.3 Ten tips for improving group presentations

1. **Hook the audience at the beginning**. Every good speech entices the listener at the beginning of the speech. A group speech is no different. The introduction matters.

2. **Introduce the team**. Somewhere in the introduction, the members of the group should be introduced.

3. **Transitions**. Every time members of the team switch into a speaking role, the speech should include a coordinated transition. Something simple might work: 'Next, Emily will discuss the financial piece of this event.' Followed by a quick, 'Thanks, Will.'

4. **Move**. The speaker should take centre stage or a position in the foreground of the delivery area. Other members should flank the speaker by being visually *behind* the speaker.

5. **Utilise visual aids well**. Look at the audience while presenting, not the visual aid.

6. **Share the work with visual aids**. During a group presentation, the speaker should not be behind a computer or podium. Switch this job to a current non-speaker.

7. **Build in strategic pauses**. Rushing through your thoughts is a bad move in individual speeches, but in group speeches, rushing inspires more rushing. Slow it down. Pause. Don't try to fill every moment with sound.

8. **Pay attention to each other**. There's nothing that inspires audience boredom like presenter boredom. If you're not the speaker, but you're on the team, at least feign interest. Watch the speaker, respond nonverbally to the speaker. This sets the tone for how your audience will view the speaker and his/her information.

9. **Conclude the speech**. The speech should be tied together at the end with key repetition of ideas and closing remarks. This is your chance to make the speech a cohesive one.

10. **Practice**. Rehearse the speech together at least three times. You should be able to predict the moves of your co-presenters to forgo the awkward stares at each other when someone misses a cue.

(McArthur 2011, para. 5)

ACTIVITY

Divide into groups of three or four. Each group will be given a piece to read. Decide amongst the group how you are going to equally share the reading. Practise the piece together. Each member of the group is to listen to the other members and offer feedback on how to improve their expression and make the reading interesting.

Each group presents their reading to the rest of the class.

ACTIVITY

In the same group, prepare a mini-presentation on a topic of your choice. Every group member must speak for at least two minutes. Your group may or may not choose to use visual aids in the presentation.

UTS:HELPS

6. Online resources

Making oral presentations: http://makingpresentationshotlist.weebly.com/index.html

Developed by Glen Geor, HELPS Advisor, this website covers the various aspects of making oral presentations. It has been designed for students who have to give academic presentations as part of their course, and teachers who are looking for further online resources on oral presentations.

TED: www.ted.com

TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design. TED holds an annual conference attended by around 1000 participants. The conference features speeches and presentations by inspiring presenters. For ways to improve your own presentation style, watch some of these professionals in action.

Toastmasters: www.toastmasters.org

This international group hosts meetings around the world. The aim is to improve presentation skills and communication techniques

Useful quotation sites:

http://www.quotationspage.com
http://www.quoteland.com
http://www.brainyquote.com

Finding images for slides:

www.shutterstock.com
www.istockphoto.com
http://www.gettyimages.com.au/creativeimages/royaltyfree

These sites have thousands of images to download. You can pay per image or subscribe for a month or longer. The quality is very high.

Slide sharing sites:

www.slideshare.net
www.authorstream.com

The Public Speaking Project: http://www.publicspeakingproject.org/

This website offers an assortment of virtual tools to help users improve their public speaking skills.

ACTIVITY

Do an online search for more presentation resources (other than those listed above). Share what you have found with the class.

UTS:HELPS

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UTS:HELPS

Appendices

Appendix A: HELPS presentation checklist

Appendix B: Post-presentation evaluation sheet

Appendix C: Presenting and explaining a diagram

UTS: HELPS HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION SUPPORT

PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

CONTENT

TOPIC

- A brief **orientation** to the topic is provided ☐
- The topic and content are of a level **appropriate** to an academic context ☐
- The content is **'pitched'** at an appropriate level for the audience (neither too difficult nor simplistic) ☐

ORGANISATION OF INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

- Is **an appropriate length** in proportion to the entire presentation ☐
- A **clear statement of thesis** or purpose is given ☐
- Includes an **outline or preview** of the content ☐

BODY

- **Main points** are well developed, and contain some **analysis** as well as **description** ☐
- Information is selected carefully to make your point clearly **without too much detail** ☐

ORIGINAL SOURCES

- **The required number** of resources is used ☐
- Sources are **appropriately acknowledged**, both verbally and on slides using appropriate reporting structures (for e.g. 'Einstein in his Theory of Relativity published in 1906 claimed that time is ….' ☐

COHESION

- The different stages of the talk are clearly introduced using appropriate **transition signals** (e.g. I'd firstly like to begin by …. / Let's now take a look at … / In summing up …..) ☐
- Ideas are **logically** sequenced ☐

CONCLUSION

- An appropriate **summary** of the main points is made and the **thesis is restated** ☐
- Concluding comments are made in **support** of the main purpose of the talk ☐

DELIVERY OF PRESENTATION

CLARITY & COHERENCE

- The content is **coherent** and **logically presented** ☐
- Information is delivered in a **spoken style** (with minimal reading or reference to notes) ☐
- Fillers (e.g. "umm", "aah") are not overused ☐

(please turn over)

Appendix A: HELPS presentation checklist

UTS: HELPS HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION SUPPORT

BODY LANGUAGE

- **Appropriate eye contact** is regularly made with most of the audience ☐
- **Natural body posture** and **hand gestures** are used (i.e. there is fluid movement) ☐

LANGUAGE

- **Grammar** does not impede meaning and sentence structures are **accurate** ☐
- **Extensive range of vocabulary** is used accurately (parallel language is used to avoid repetition) ☐
- **Pronunciation** (especially of keywords) is **correct** ☐
- **Voice** is **clear** and **well projected** ☐
- **Chunking** is effectively employed ☐
- **Intonation** and **stress** on words is natural ☐
- **Pace** is appropriate (i.e. ensure that you are not speaking too quickly) ☐

For learning resources on Pronunciation, go to:
http://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/support/helps/self-help-resources/pronunciation

VISUAL AIDS

- Visual aids are **relevant** and used effectively to **support the content** ☐
- Visual aids are managed in an **organised** manner so as not to interrupt the flow of the talk ☐
- The number of slides is in reasonable proportion to the length of the presentation ☐
- Visual aids are **clearly visible** (use an appropriate font, colour and point size), are **not too complicated** (may be easily and quickly read) and contain **clear headings** ☐

DISCUSSION

- An **invitation** for questions is offered ☐
- Questions and discussion are handled **confidently.** Be thoroughly familiar with your material. Responses that cannot be provided may be followed up later. ☐
- Time is devoted to group **discussion** and **feedback** (where necessary) ☐
- **Focus questions** have been prepared beforehand (where necessary) ☐

ADDITIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES

- For **practical advice and tips** on presentations (including **HELPS downloadable materials**), visit: **http://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/support/helps/self-help-resources/presentation-skills**

- For **interactive advice** on delivering presentations, go to: **http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~comcoach/**

- For **real-life examples** of presentations, visit: **www.ted.com**

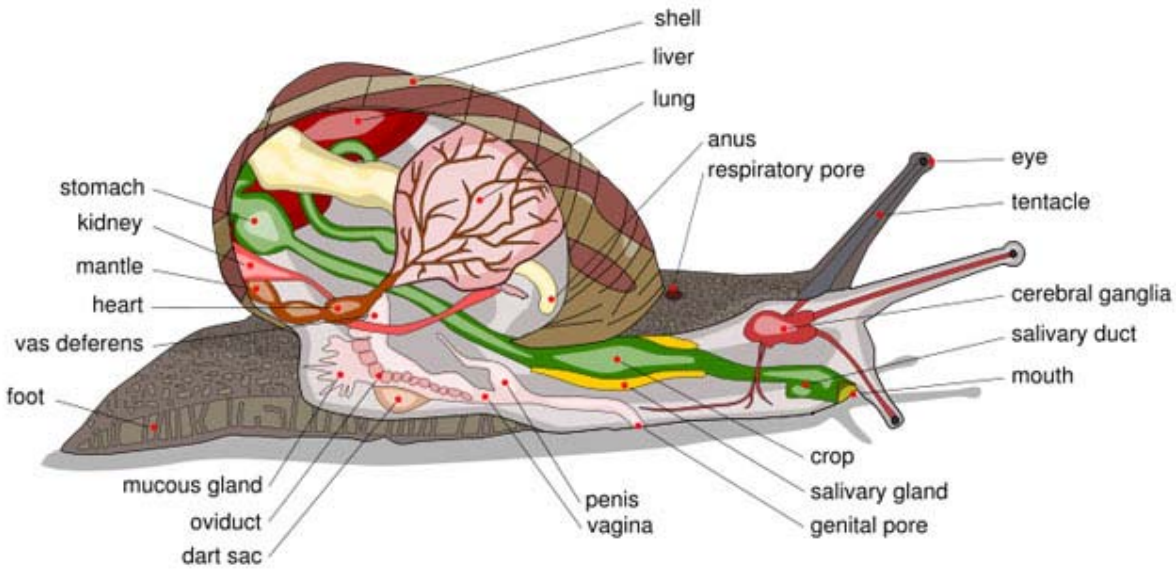
Post-presentation evaluation sheet (Dwyer 2009)

1	Did I communicate the purpose and outcomes of the topic clearly enough?	Yes ☐ No ☐
2	Did I use language suited to the audience?	Yes ☐ No ☐
3	Did I use INTRO?	Yes ☐ No ☐
4	Did I use suitable strategies in the body and conclusion?	Yes ☐ No ☐
5	Did my presentation flow logically?	Yes ☐ No ☐
6	Did I use resources well?	Yes ☐ No ☐
7	Did I use my voice well and make eye contact with the audience?	Yes ☐ No ☐
8	Did I demonstrate confidence and handle difficult situations?	Yes ☐ No ☐
9	Did I establish a rapport with the audience?	Yes ☐ No ☐

10	Did I allow sufficient time for the presentation?	Yes ☐ No ☐
11	Were the outcomes met by the end of the session?	Yes ☐ No ☐
12	Did I speak only when I was looking up?	Yes ☐ No ☐
13	Did I include sufficient information on the topic?	Yes ☐ No ☐
14	Was I sufficiently familiar with the topic?	Yes ☐ No ☐
15	Did I allow sufficient time for questions?	Yes ☐ No ☐
16	Did I make a mental note of the non-verbal communication such as yawns or sighs?	Yes ☐ No ☐
17	Were the resources adequate for the presentation?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Strategies I can use to improve my next presentation are:		

Presenting and explaining a diagram

You may be asked to present some sort of visual information such as a diagram (i.e. table or figure) with which you may be very familiar but which will require explanation to your audience. The diagram may be labelled and it may require detailed explanation. For example, how would you describe a diagram of the body of the humble land snail?



(Image under GNU license. Author Original by Wikimedia Commons User Al2, Snail World 2017)

Other examples of diagrams from the UTS faculties could be a table of financial figures, a diagram of the structure of the human heart, a flowchart outlining a process, a diagram of the inside a wind turbine generator, an architectural plan, a diagram showing acupuncture needle placement for headaches, a diagram to show how the Bitcoin Blockchain works and so on.

Here are some guidelines on how to present a diagram such as the one of a land snail that appears above. You can use your hand or a (laser) pointer to point to what you are talking about (more about 'pointing' later).

1. Clearly state what the diagram is:

   'This is a diagram of the body and internal organs of a land snail.'

2. Give the audience a general idea of the diagram:

   'You can clearly see the detailed nature of what is underneath the shell of a land snail.'

3. Explain to your audience how you are going to present this diagram*:*

   'Firstly, I will talk about external parts of the land snail and then I will talk about the location of the snail's internal organs.'

4. Then follow this order using inclusive language such as *'You can see that …'*, or *'If you have a look at …, you can begin to understand how …'*:

   '*You can see that the snail's eye sits on top of the tentacle, this is very important because …'*

5. Provide an overview of what you want to talk about on the diagram and then keep to this order when elaborating on these points:

   'I am sure you will all have held a snail at one point and will all know that the snail's shell is very fragile. This shell …'

   'Now to the internal organs of the snail. As you can see from the diagram, among other organs, the snail has a kidney, a stomach, a liver, and a lung. These are the organs that I will be talking about in more detail.'

6. Make the transition to the body of the presentation where you are going to talk about the snail's organs in more detail:

   'As you can see, the snail's kidney is situated under …' (Reinhart 2013)

7. Conclude in the usual way by summarising what you have talked about.

Questioning

There may be times when you sense that your audience does not understand a particular piece of information in your presentation. If you notice that they are not looking at you, are using their phones, or appear to have 'switched off', a shift in strategy is needed. It may be useful to attempt to regain their attention by either simplifying your language, using inclusive language, or by asking your audience some open questions such as *'How fast do you think a snail can travel?'; 'Where do you think snails go to in the day time?';* or more academic types of questions if your audience have the same level of knowledge as you.

Pointing

If you are going to point to the diagram with your hands, you will need to practise how you can do this and still maintain contact with your audience. Alternatively, point to the diagram first and then turn around and face the audience before you begin to speak.

You could also consider using a laser pointer. If you do use a pointer, use it wisely and sparingly – just point to what you want to talk about and then turn the pointer off. Do not circle things or make the pointer dance all over your presentation. This can be distracting for an audience. Finally, remember to always face the audience when you are speaking.

Pronunciation

You probably know your topic very well, and it is likely that you can speak about your diagram without any notes. If this is the case, there is a danger that you may speak too fast. Your audience needs time to understand what you are saying. Remember the importance of pausing at the end of each phrase, or sentence. A good tip is to count from 1 to 3 in your head before you start talking again.

INTRO

Now that you have an idea of how present a diagram, let's revise incorporating INTRO into a presentation when the entire presentation is based on a diagram. This suggested format is outlined below:

1. Welcome: '*Hello everyone, my name is Vereegoodat Prezentayshuns and I am here to talk to you today about the humble land snail.'*

2. Show the diagram of the land snail on the screen.

3. Begin **INTRO**

   I (capturing the audience's **I**nterest): *The common land snail has much more to it than you may ever have imagined.*

   N (why the presentation is **N**eeded): *We need to know more about land snails because they are a good indicator of a healthy ecology, and they are important in the cycling of calcium within a food chain as many of their predators rely on the calcium that snail shells provide to meet their nutritional needs.*

   T (the **T**ime that the presentation will take): *Over the next five minutes I am going to show you a diagram of what a land snail looks like without its shell, and discuss its features.*

   R (providing an opportunity for audience **R**esponse)*: Before you saw this diagram, how many of you had any idea of what a land snail looks like without its shell?*

   O (outlining the predicted **O**utcomes): *My hope is that after this presentation you will have a new-found appreciation for the common land snail.*

4. You would then continue as per the previous guidelines: *'This is a diagram of the body ..'*, and so on.

ACTIVITY

Present and explain a diagram from your area of speciality using INTRO and the points above. Decide whether you will be pointing with your hands or with a (laser) pointer. Remember to pause after a phrase or a sentence. Connect with your audience by maintaining eye contact and check understanding by asking open questions. After your presentation, check your competency against the Feedback table below.

Feedback

Followed guidelines	**Yes**	**No**
Greeted your audience and introduced yourself		
Showed your diagram		
Incorporated INTRO		
Clearly stated what the diagram is		
Explained how you were going to present your diagram		
Followed the order (outlined above) and used inclusive language		
Provided an overview of what you wanted to talk about on the diagram		
Made the transition to the body of your presentation where you talked about details		
Made an effort to maintain positive body language by looking at your audience when you spoke and not looking at your diagram		
Pointed to your diagram using your hands or a laser pointer		
If using a (laser) pointer, used the (laser) pointer in a way that enhanced, rather than distracted from, your presentation		
Included a clear conclusion		
Spoke at a good pace and included pauses		
Asked open questions to ensure you maintained contact with your audience		

References

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