

Presentations Skills to Train Teachers

Presentations skills are very useful and assure that the audience learns. Aside from presentation techniques, confidence and experience are big factors. You are not alone if the thought of speaking in public scares you. Giving a presentation is worrying for many people. But don't worry - your audience wants you to succeed. They're on your side. They're glad it's you up there and not them. All you need to do is follow the guidelines contained on this page, and everything will be fine. Don't try to get rid of the butterflies - just get them flying in formation.

Good preparation is the key to confidence, which is the key to you being relaxed.

Good preparation and rehearsal will reduce your nerves by 75%, increase the likelihood of avoiding errors to 95%, and let's face it, your audience will know if you've not done it.

Presentation Theory

Preparation and knowledge are the pre-requisites for a successful presentation, but confidence and control are just as important. Good presenting is about *entertaining* as well as conveying information. As well, people retain more if they are enjoying themselves and feeling relaxed.

You have 4 - 7 seconds in which to make a positive impact and good **opening** impression, so make sure you have a good, strong, solid introduction, and rehearse it to death. Try to build your own credibility and create a safe comfortable environment for your audience. Smiling helps...

- Don't start with a joke unless you are supremely confident - jokes are high risk things at the best of times, let alone at the start of a presentation.
- Don't apologize for anything first off (ideally never) unless you've quite seriously erred, and as a rule try to start on time even if some of the audience is late.
- The average attention span of an average listener is only 6-8 minutes, so intersperse your material with 'spice' and a variety of stimuli, media and movement to maintain maximum interest.
- Memorize a couple of good quotations and always credit the source.
- Having quotes and other devices is important to give your presentation depth and texture, as well as keeping your audience interested. "If the only tool in your toolbox is a hammer you'll treat everything as a nail." (Abraham Maslow)
- Be daring and bold and have fun. Use props and pass them around if you can. The more senses you can stimulate the more fun your audience will have and the more they'll remember. (The best prop of all is a bag of fresh lemons: they look great, they smell great, they feel great, and they're cheap, so you can give out loads and not ask for them back - all you have to do is think of an excuse to use them!)
- Examples of 'spice' that you can use to bring your presentation to life, and keep your audience attentive and enjoying themselves:
 - Stories
 - Questions
 - Pictures, cartoons and video-clips
 - Sound-clips
 - Straw polls

- Audience participation exercises
 - Quotations
 - Props
 - Examples
 - Analogies
 - Statistics and
 - Body language, and the changing tone and pitch of your voice.
- Take the pressure off yourself by not speaking all the time. Get the audience doing things, and make use of all the communications senses available.
 - For instance; the use of visual aids generally heightens retention of the spoken word by up to 70%. Figures on the subject of information retention are:
 - Read 10% - Heard 20% - Seen 30% - Heard and Seen 50% - Said 70% - Said and Done 90%.
 - Create your own prompts and notes - whatever suits you best. Cue cards are fine but make sure to number them and tie them together in order. A single sheet at-a-glance timetable is a great safety-net for anything longer than half an hour. You can use this to monitor your timing and pace.

Preparation - Creating your Presentation

Think about your audience, your aims, their expectations, the surroundings, the facilities available, and what type of presentation you are going to give (lecture style, informative, participative, etc).

What are your aims? To inform, inspire and entertain, maybe to demonstrate and prove, and maybe to persuade.

Clearly identify your subject and your purpose to yourself, and then let the creative process take over for a while to gather all the possible ideas for subject matter and how you could present it. Use brainstorming and mind-mapping to create your outline.

When you have all your ideas on paper, organize them into subject matter categories, three is best. Does it flow? Is there a logical sequence that people will follow and you'll be comfortable with?

Use the **rule of three** to structure the presentation; it has a natural balance and flow. A simple approach is to have *three main sections*. Each section has *three sub-sections*. Each of these can have three sub-sections, and so on. A 30 minute presentation is unlikely to need more than three sections, with three sub-sections each. Presentations almost always take longer to deliver than you think the material will last.

- You must create a strong introduction and a strong close.
- You must tell people what you're going to speak about and what your purpose is.
- Essentially the structure of all good presentations is to: "Tell'em what you're gonna tell'em. Tell'em. Then tell'em what you told'em." (George Bernard Shaw)

Ask an honest and tactful friend to listen and watch you practice. Ask for their comments about how you can improve, especially your body position and movement, your pace and voice, and whether they understood everything. If they can't make at least a half a dozen constructive suggestions ask someone else. Amend and refine if necessary, and if possible have a final run-through in the real setting if it's strange to you.

Plan and control the layout of the room as much as you are able. If you are a speaker at someone else's event you'll not have much of a say in this, but if it's your event then take care to position yourself, your equipment and your audience and the seating plan so that it suits you and the situation. For instance, don't lay out a room theatre-style if you want people to participate in teams. Use a boardroom layout if you want a co-operative debating approach. Make sure everyone can see the visuals displays.

Delivering your Presentation

Relax, have a rock-solid practiced opening, and smile. Be firm, be confident and be in control; the floor is yours, and the audience is on your side.

Introduce yourself and tell them what you are going to tell them. Tell them why you are telling them it; why it's important, and why it's you that's telling them. Tell them how long you're going to take, and tell them when they can ask questions (if you're nervous about being thrown off-track then it's okay to ask them save their questions until the end). Remember, initial impact is made and audience mood towards you is established in the first 4-7 seconds.

Be aware of your own body language and remember what advice you got from your friend on your practice run. You are the most powerful visual aid of all, so use your body movement and position well. Don't stand in front of the screen when the projector is on.

If you want a respite or some thinking time, asking the audience a question or involving them in an exercise takes the pressure off you, and gives you a bit of breathing space.

If you don't know the answers to a question say so and deal with it later. You have the right to defer questions until the end (on the grounds that you may well be covering it in the presentation later anyway, or just simply because you say so).

Creating and giving presentations – A step by step guide

1. define purpose
2. gather content and presentation ideas
3. structure the subject matter
4. develop how to present it
5. prepare presentation
6. practice
7. plan, experience, control the environment
8. 'dress rehearsal' if warranted

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Presentation Plan for *Shaping the Way We Teach English*

1. Purpose of this training:

2. Review the module in the instructor's manual, the video clip and the readings and resources CD and select the *three* most important ideas.

3. Structure the subject matter for your presentation.

4. Develop a presentation plan.
 - a. Introduction
 - i. Before viewing
 - ii. Preview Vocabulary
 - iii. Questions to be answered while watching
 - b. Viewing
 - c. Debriefing
 - i. Reiterate the purpose of the module
 - ii. Ask participants to tell more about what they saw
 - d. Reflection questions

5. Closing summary points