



Show-Me

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Literacy.....

TEACHING PRESENTATION SKILLS TO ESL STUDENTS

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First of all, let's define what we mean by 'presentation'. For our purposes, we mean: 'A short talk by one person to a group of people introducing and describing a particular subject (for example: a new product, company figures or a proposed advertising campaign).'

This is a narrow definition. In reality, presentations may be given by more than one person, are not necessarily short and are not necessarily a 'talk' since they may be by video, Internet etc.

Choice of Subject

Unless you are going to specify subjects for presentation, the first question that goes through any student's head is 'What will I talk about?' That is where preparation on your part, perhaps weeks before, can help.

Before any mention of a presentation, elicit interests from each student. These may be hobbies, professional activities, past holidays etc. Rarely do you find that every student in a group is a professional sky-diver, brain surgeon or stand-up comedian. Yet, with a little prompting, you will often find that each student has an interest or skill that is particular to her but of potential interest to others. Having dug a little into each student's mind, you can store the interests for the moment when you start teaching presentations. Even then, you do not normally need to suggest to each student what he could talk about. Say something like: 'The subject could be anything, for example, your work, your hobby, a holiday.' Only if a student is at a complete loss do you need to help her with your previously elicited list of interests. But students are often more imaginative than we suppose. One of the best student presentations seen by one teacher was 'How To Change Baby's Nappy', illustrated with a life size doll, Pampers, talcum powder and a flask of water!

Time limit

If students are apprehensive about giving a presentation, it may help to point out that it need not be a long presentation, 'just 5 or 10 minutes, plus questions.' In reality, it is far more difficult to prepare and give a 5-minute presentation than a 20-minute one. The important thing is that they be given a time-limit of some kind. It is up to you to decide this. It will depend on how many students there are, the overall time available, and whether the presentations are to be given during the same lesson or over a series of lessons. If you are teaching presentation giving (rather than using presentations simply for speaking practice) you should adhere strictly to time limits. Nevertheless, it would be wise to build a certain amount of overrun time into your lesson plan.

Equipment

Encourage students to use support material and visual aids. The bare minimum would be a whiteboard or flipchart. If you have an OHP, so much the better. Remind them not to overcrowd their graphics. One graphic, one point. Two points, two graphics. And don't forget the value of realia, actual products or samples that the presenter brings in from outside.

Preparation

Without doubt, preparation is the key element of any presentation. You cannot make this point too forcefully. Encourage your students to take time to prepare. Proper preparation gives the presenter confidence on the day. You can help them to prepare by explaining what they need to think about: why? who? where? when? how? what?

The Presentation

As a teacher, you are presenting all the time and probably take for granted the sheer mechanics of presentation. You can help your students by teaching the principles of presentation under these main areas:

preparation

structuring

language

signposting & linking

visual aids

body language

audience rapport

Keywords And Notes

Show your students how to prepare notes and keywords instead of a text. Remind them that the objective is not to show everybody the top of their head and read a text. The objective is speaking, (apparently) spontaneous speaking. The presenter who knows his subject and speaks unaided, without text, even without notes, is fascinating. The presenter who reads a text is soporific.

Questions

Presenters usually indicate to their audience when they will answer questions - ie, during or after the presentation proper. Questions and answers are a supremely valuable part of any presentation for there is true interactivity. Encourage students to look on questions, even hostile questions, positively. A hostile questioner is demonstrating interest. Furthermore, with correct handling, he can be turned into a powerful ally. A member of the audience who asks no questions and makes no comments is far more dangerous!

Using Video

Videoring each presentation for subsequent playback and comment can be productive. You might give each participant a cassette of his performance. Again, this depends on various factors. The important point is that any such exercise should have a positive, beneficial result. If there is a danger that videoring will be counter-productive, don't do it. If you're not sure, ask your students. Maybe they will all clamour to be videoed!

Teacher Feedback

When teaching presentations, you will probably want to give feedback on each presentation. Try using a prepared observation feedback form, divided into sections such as body language, signposting and audience rapport. After the presentation, you can give your comments verbally and/or in writing. A feedback form is particularly valuable in giving the presenting student something tangible to take away, both as a mark of achievement and as a tool for improvement.

Peer Feedback

Depending on group, level and culture, you may wish to invite feedback from other students on the presenting student's performance. You can give the audience a prepared feedback form, listing the points to watch out for and comment on. The audience should be looking for positive points at least as much as for negative ones. This can be a useful activity as it sensitises all students to the do's and don'ts of presentation giving.

Presentation Resources

A number of ELT coursebooks deal with the language and skills of presentation giving. There is a particularly useful chapter in 'Business Class' (David Cotton & Sue Robbins, published Addison Wesley Longman ELT).

The Presentation

Most presentations are divided into 3 main parts (+ questions):

1	INTRODUCTION	(Questions)
2	BODY	
3	CONCLUSION	
	Questions	

As a general rule in communication, repetition is valuable. In presentations, there is a golden rule about repetition:

1. Say what you are going to say,
2. say it,

Then say what you have just said.

In other words, use the three parts of your presentation to reinforce your message. In the introduction, you tell your audience what your message is going to be. In the body, you tell your audience your real message. In the conclusion, you summarize what your message was.

We will now consider each of these parts in more detail.

Introduction

The introduction is a very important - perhaps the most important - part of your presentation. This is the first impression that your audience have of you. You should concentrate on getting your introduction right. You should use the introduction to:

1. **welcome your audience**
 2. **introduce your subject**
 3. **outline the structure of your presentation**
- give instructions about questions**

The following table shows examples of language for each of these functions. You may need to modify the language as appropriate.

Function	Possible language
1 Welcoming your audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good morning, ladies and gentlemen • Good morning, gentlemen • Good afternoon, ladies and gentleman • Good afternoon, everybody
2 Introducing your subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am going to talk today about... • The purpose of my presentation is to introduce our new range of...
3 Outlining your structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To start with I'll describe the progress made this year. Then I'll mention some of the problems we've encountered and how we overcame them. After that I'll consider the possibilities for further growth next year. Finally, I'll summarize my presentation (before concluding with some recommendations).
4 Giving instructions about questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do feel free to interrupt me if you have any questions. • I'll try to answer all of your questions after the presentation. • I plan to keep some time for questions after the presentation.

Body

The body is the 'real' presentation. If the introduction was well prepared and delivered, you will now be 'in control'. You will be relaxed and confident.

The body should be well structured, divided up logically, with plenty of carefully spaced visuals.

Remember these key points while delivering the body of your presentation:

- do not hurry
- be enthusiastic
- give time on visuals
- maintain eye contact
- modulate your voice
- look friendly
- keep to your structure
- use your notes
- signpost throughout

remain polite when dealing with difficult questions

Conclusion

Use the conclusion to:

1. **Sum up**
2. **(Give recommendations if appropriate)**
3. **Thank your audience**

Invite questions

The following table shows examples of language for each of these functions. You may need to modify the language as appropriate.

Function	Possible language
1 Summing up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conclude,... • In conclusion,... • Now, to sum up... • So let me summaries/recap what I've said. • Finally, may I remind you of some of the main points we've considered.
2 Giving recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conclusion, my recommendations are... • I therefore suggest/propose/recommend the following strategy.
3 Thanking your audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many thanks for your attention. • May I thank you all for being such an attentive audience.
4 Inviting questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now I'll try to answer any questions you may have. • Can I answer any questions? • Are there any questions? • Do you have any questions? • Are there any final questions?

Questions

Questions are a good opportunity for you to interact with your audience. It may be helpful for you to try to predict what questions will be asked so that you can prepare your response in advance. You may wish to accept questions at any time during your presentation, or to keep a time for questions after your presentation. Normally, it's your decision, and you should make it clear during the introduction. Be polite with all questioners, even if they ask difficult questions. They are showing interest in what you have to say and they deserve attention. Sometimes you can reformulate a question. Or answer the question with another question. Or even ask for comment from the rest of the audience.

By Lori Halverson-Wente

INFORMATION SPEECH OUTLINE WORKSHEET

(adapted from: Osborn & Osborn, 1997)

DIRECTIONS: Hand this rough draft worksheet in as directed in class. *Remember* you will hand in a typed version of this worksheet on the day of your speech presentation.

Speech Title: _____

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about _____

I. Introduction (*Your goal here is to draw us into your speech...*)

Attention Material (*This step helps us focus our attention on you and your message. It is suggested that you begin with a story, quote, statistic, definition, use of suspense, etc. **Never begin with**, "Hi I am ____ and today I am going to talk about ____."*):

Tie to Audience (*This step informs the audience how your speech topic will relate to them. Be specific about how we can USE this information in our everyday lives. Here you will be more specific than in your introduction speech.*):

C. Credibility Material (*Here the speaker tells the audience why he or she is credible, can be trusted, knows the materials, etc. How do you know about this? Why are you interested, etc.?*):

Thesis & Preview: (*Here summarize your speech in one sentence and continue by previewing the main points of the speech.*):

Thesis:

Preview: Today I will tell you first _____, second _____ and third _____.

(**Transition into Body of Speech** -- Now that we've covered _____, let's go to _____ OR SOMETHING MORE CREATIVE WOULD BE WONDERFUL!)



II. Body

A. Main Point #1 (*Your main points are the main ideas of your speech. They are the ideas necessary in supporting/proving/explaining your thesis. They are "reasons why," "primary types," "steps," etc. Speeches are organized into 2-5 main points. I included a space for three main points in this worksheet. However, feel free to modify this format as you see necessary.*):

1. **Subpoint #1** (*The subpoints are the breakdown of the main point into smaller units. They usually are your examples, narratives, statistics, testimony, etc. In other words, the subpoints explain the main points. You may have 2-5 subpoints. I have listed three here. **Feel free to modify this as you see necessary.** Do use the golden rule: one hard piece of "fact" or "statistics," one piece of "softer" evidence such as an example or story and then a piece of testimony to give it credibility.*)

2. **Subpoint #2:**

3. **Subpoint #3:**

(**Transition** into Main Point 2 -- Now that we have covered _____, let's move to _____. Again, use a more creative approach if you'd like! Just remember that your transitions need to review your last point AND preview your next point. They show a connection and are a good time to remind the audience why this information is important.)

B. Main Point #2

1. Subpoint #1:

2. Subpoint #2:

3. Subpoint #2:

(**Transition** into Main Point 3 Now that we covered _____, finally we will _____. Or again something more creative would work too!)

C. Main Point Three:

Subpoint #1:

2. Subpoint #2:

3. Subpoint #3:



(REMEMBER I LISTED 3 SPACES FOR MAIN POINTS IN THE WORKSHEET, BUT YOU MAY HAVE 2-5 MAIN POINTS....)

(**Transition** to the end... begins with the brake light as indicated below...)

III. Conclusion

A. **Brake light** (signals the end such as, "To sum things up..." or something more creative.)

B. **Summary** (reviews the main points of the speech in the order covered):

C. **Tie Back to Audience** (tells us again how we benefit from knowing this, show the connection between you and the audience):

D. **Concluding Memorable Remarks** (gives you a way to end; never, ever end on "that's it" -- plan out the end, better yet, tie back to the introduction's attention device):

INFORMATIVE SPEECH CRITIQUE FORM



NAME: _____

SPEECH TOPIC: _____

5=Incredible! 4=Good, 3=Average, 2=Fair, 1=Poor

INTRODUCTION

- 1 2 3 4 5 Gained attention/interest with topic
- 1 2 3 4 5 Established relevance of topic to audience
- 1 2 3 4 5 Established credibility
- 1 2 3 4 5 Clear thesis and previewed main points

BODY

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Clear method of organizing main points
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Variety of supports used
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Use of research (cited who, when and where)
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Adaptation of materials
- 1 2 3 4 5 Clear transitional (connective) statements between main points
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Topic was appropriate and sufficiently narrow
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Use of visual aid

CONCLUSION

- 1 2 3 4 5 Clearly summarized main points
- 1 2 3 4 5 Reinforced benefit of information to audience
- 1 2 3 4 5 Final, memorable words

DELIVERY

- 1 2 3 4 5 Maintained good eye contact with audience (notecards used only to prompt)
- 1 2 3 4 5 Used voice effectively (pitch, volume, variety, pauses)
- 1 2 3 4 5 Used nonverbal cues to enhance message (gestures, face, body)
- 1 2 3 4 5 Used movement effectively
- 1 2 3 4 5 Overall Fluency
- 1 2 3 4 5 Time

ROUGH DRAFT OUTLINE ____/10

OUTLINE ____/20

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS REPORT ____/20

SELF ANALYSIS REPORT ____/20

COMMENTS:

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