

Making Public Presentations

Outcomes

Present an effective public presentation:

1. Plan and prepare the presentation.
2. Make the presentation using appropriate equipment effectively.
3. Evaluate the presentation.

Assessment criteria

A presentation will be evaluated by an observer using the criteria set out in the checklist provided in the section on Evaluate the presentation.

References

Newble, D & Cannon, R. 1987. *A handbook for medical teachers*. Lancaster: MTP Press

<http://www.ljlseminars.com/monthtip.htm>

<http://www.botany.uwc.ac.za/botany/talks.htm>

Making Public Presentations

"Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't; the other half have nothing to say and keep saying it."

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Failing to plan is planning for failure.

Planning and preparing the presentation.

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Identify the purpose of the presentation

Activity

Answer the following questions:

Why this specific presentation?

What should the audience go away with at the end (or be able to do)?

What message do you wish to convey?

What reaction do you expect or hope for from the audience?

Audience analysis

A.U.D.I.E.N.C.E. Analysis - It's your key to success

<http://www.ljlseminars.com/audience.htm>

Activity

Answer the following questions:

What will the approximate number of people in the audience be?

What will the age/gender/culture/differing abilities mix of the audience be?

What is their knowledge of the subject?

What do the audience expect to learn or hear?

Collect and select data

Do not fall into the trap of trying to cram more than is possible into your presentation. You have to be very selective and restrict yourself to one or a few key aspects of your work.

Talking to an audience is often a very inefficient means of communication. About half of what we hear is lost immediately, another quarter is lost within a few hours, and almost nothing of the detail is retained after 24 hours, unless the information is directly applicable to ones field of expertise or research.

Activity

Write down in **one sentence** the main purpose of your presentation. What is the main message you want to get across? Then identify three or four pieces of evidence to support your message.

Plan the structure of the presentation

Once you have decided on the main message you wish to convey and which pieces of evidence you will use to support your message you can plan a basic structure for your presentation.

The following is an example for a plan for a presentation of research findings:

Introduction

Statement of the purpose of the research

Description of methods and results

Conclusions and recommendations

Activity

To plan your presentation answer the following questions:

In one concise sentence, what is the purpose of the presentation?

Who is the audience?

What are the main points of this presentation?

What supporting material or evidence do I have for each of the main points?

What visual aids, if any, do I need?

Do I have an effective and concise introduction to capture attention?

Have I planned transitions to proceed smoothly from one main point to the next?

Have I taken the attention span of the audience into account and used illustrations, anecdotes and humour appropriately?

In my final summary, how do I plan to tell them "What's In It For Me?"

Have I prepared and polished the language and words of my delivery?

Have I taken care of the little details that will help me speak more confidently?

Select appropriate equipment and visual aids

Select appropriate equipment and visual aids

Media should enhance a presentation, not detract from it. Appropriate selection is the key to success.

Decide on equipment and visual aids according to the facilities available:

Overhead transparencies page 5

Slides page 6

Computer generated slide shows e.g. PowerPoint, etc. page 8

Video clips page 8

Boards (chalkboard, whiteboard, flip chart) page 9

Real objects (models, specimens, patients)

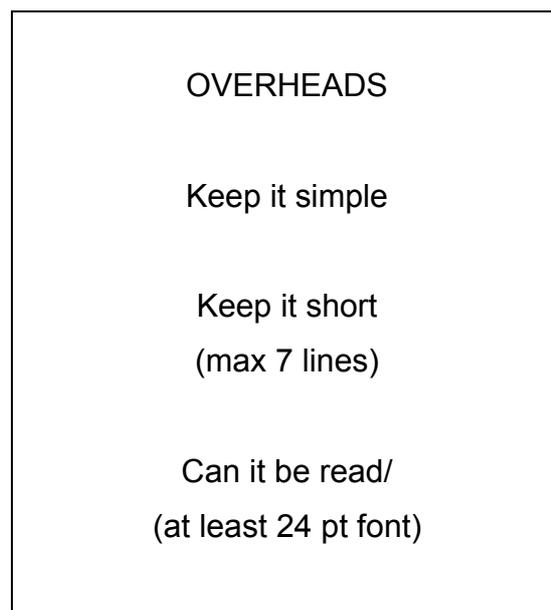
Using visual aids as notes

<http://www.ljlseminars.com/visuals.htm>

Overhead transparencies

Overhead transparencies are relatively quick, easy and cheap to produce, as well as being flexible and amenable to last minute changes. Their main advantage is that they can be used in a lighted room. Their main disadvantages are that they cannot show photographs very well, and tend to look sloppy when prepared by hand. The overhead projector can be obtrusive and often gets in the way.

If you choose to use overhead transparencies, use large fonts, and try to make your transparencies using a computer package and a laser printer. Try to avoid hand-written overhead transparencies. Do not photocopy printed or typed tables. They are inappropriate and their small fonts are illegible when projected. Never, under any circumstances, say “I know you can’t read this but ... “.



Many of the points in the section **Slides** (link page 6) on what makes a good slide also apply to overhead transparencies.

Using overhead transparencies

<http://www.ljlseminars.com/transp.htm>

Slides

Slides have the advantage that they can show pictures and colour-coded graphs easily, the apparatus for showing them is unobtrusive, and they are accepted as the standard international format for oral conference presentations.

The main disadvantages of slides is that they require a darkened room in which to project effectively, but most conferences cater for this nowadays. Slides can be expensive to produce and last minute changes are impossible. They need to be made well in advance.

The following are some suggestions for producing good 35mm slides:

- Provide a visual aid for every point you wish to make in your presentation.
- As an introduction state the main points of your presentation clearly in point form on one or more slides and make sure they are legible.
- The message on any one slide should be limited to one single idea, concept, comparison or aspect.
- Slides should contain absolutely no noise, visual clutter or redundancy.
- Avoid making slides from material designed for a printed medium. Text, data tables and graphs in a form used for publication or in a thesis are rarely suitable for projection during a presentation.
- If you have no slide to back up a particular point, do not leave the previous or next slide up when you are talking. Rather use a blank slide or, better still, have a slide with keywords on it.
- Never present raw data in a presentation.
- Never present tables or graphs where trends are not obvious at a glance. Extract significant data and highlight it. Be creative in doing this.
- Bold tables with relevant comparisons and simplistic colourful charts arouse viewer interest and keep them focused on your key areas and they are memorable.
- Use colour to enhance your presentation, but don't overdo it, and make sure that the colour combinations you choose project well together. Avoid extreme contrasting colours such as red with bright green. These colours fight for

attention and do not enhance what you are trying to communicate. Choose harmonious colour ranges such as a range of blues, with one exceptional colour, for example, tan or pale yellow.

- If the same information is needed more than once during a presentation, use multiple copies of the same slide so that you do not need to back-track through slides that have already been shown.
- Do not use all CAPITAL LETTERS ON A SLIDE. They are too difficult to read quickly, and can be distracting.
- Do not over use fonts. Choose one family of fonts with a choice of normal, bold and italic. Beware of using decorative fonts - they lose legibility when viewed through a projector.
- Instead of presenting a single complex slide, present a series of simple slides which progressively add information.
- The slide should be designed to appear on the screen for a sufficiently long time to inform, and not long enough to become boring. Generally slides should be left on for not less than 10 seconds and not more than 30 seconds. If your slide must be up longer than this, consider making it into a series of slides of increasing complexity.
- Use photographs if they help you to make a point, but don't overdo it.
- Show a flow chart if a logical argument is being presented, and build it up step-by-step.
- Keep slides to a horizontal (landscape) format when ever possible.
- Check your slides for legibility as soon as you get them. If they are not legible, they should be redone. Hold the slide at 50 cm from your eye, against a light source such as a window, and if you cannot read the lettering, then neither will the audience when the slide is projected.
- Mount all slides uniformly to facilitate focus and smooth operation of the projector. If you have slides with different mounts, remove the mounts from the odd ones and replace them with the common mount. Never use thick plastic or glass mounts, and never include slides with damaged mounts.
- Mark each slide according to international convention. A dot at the bottom left of the mount as one holds the slide up and looks at it in the correct orientation. This dot usually goes top right under the ball of the thumb as the slide goes into the tray for most projectors.

- Number your slides in the required sequence by writing on the front of the mount, and write your name on the mount as well.
- Supervise the loading of the magazine at the conference venue.
- Critical to the timing of your presentation is the number of slides you have in your presentation. There are no hard-and-fast rules about the number of slides, but generally, one slide for every 30 seconds of talking is comfortable as long as your slides are kept simple. Thus a 15 minute talk would have about 30 slides, plus or minus 10 slides depending on their complexity. Forty-five slides would be the absolute maximum for a 15 minute presentation, and in most cases would be far too many.

Computer generated slide shows

You can create a very professional presentation using a computer generated slide show such as PowerPoint, WordPerfect Presentations, etc.

Make sure you know how to operate the a data projector. It is best to have a back-up should the technology fail you.

Using Computer LCD Display Projectors

<http://www.ljlseminars.com/lcdtip.htm>

Refer to the sections on **Transparencies** (link page 5) and **Slides** (link page 6) for guidelines.

Video clips

These can be very professional but expensive and can't easily be changed or corrected. They also need a dark room.

Check the video equipment and monitor before hand to ensure that everything is working. Have the sound adjusted and know how to use the remote control.

Locate the point at which you want to start before you begin.

Boards (chalkboard, whiteboard, flip chart)

You can use boards to the best advantage by:

- always checking that the whiteboard pens are in good order and that they are indeed whiteboard pens and not permanent markers.
- practising writing on boards before hand.
- using note form whenever possible (writing out complete sentences is usually a waste of time).
- standing to the side of the board when you have finished writing so that the audience can read what you have written.
- writing large enough for your audience to see.
- talking to your audience not to the board.
- generally avoiding talking and writing at the same time.

11 Tips for using flip charts more effectively

<http://www.ljlseminars.com/flipchrt.htm>

Real objects (models, specimens, patients)

Group presentations

Sometimes a group will make a team presentation. The guidelines provided for planning, preparing and making a presentation apply equally to a team presentation. The team must agree on each group member's contribution and role. It is vitally important that the whole presentation be carefully scripted and particular attention must be paid to how the transitions from one team member to the next will be made, so as not to disrupt the flow of the presentation. There should be consistency in the style of presentation. Continuity will be enhanced by using the same colour scheme and layout when using overhead transparencies or slides. A rehearsal of the entire presentation with all team members participating is vital to ensure a smooth and professional presentation.

Polishing and Practice

Once you are certain of what you want to say and the visual aids you want to use, it is advisable to write the text of the talk in full. Use an easy conversational style rather than the style you use for journal publications. As you go along identify the correct positions for overhead transparencies, slides, etc. There must always be an accurate match between the content of the transparency or slide and what you are saying. If you do not have a transparency or slide to illustrate what you are saying switch off the overhead projector or insert a blank slide, rather than leaving on an irrelevant transparency or slide. If you will be using the same transparency or slide more than once, have multiple copies made.

You must now decide whether to read the prepared text or not. If you have a highly visual presentation most of the audience will be looking at the screen so the fact that you are reading is less critical. If you are reading from text remember to look up frequently to make eye contact with the audience. Speaking with the aid of cue cards or cues supplied by your transparencies or slides is the preferred option. This will require plenty of rehearsal.

Activity

Practice your presentation and ask an honest and critical colleague to listen, to give you feedback and to check your timing. A dress rehearsal in front of an audience, such as your Department, provides an invaluable opportunity to get feedback on your presentation as well as to receive and handle questions, which is just as important as presenting the talk itself.

a) Understanding the problem

Every time we speak in front of an audience we put ourselves on the line. We fear being ignored, humiliated or rejected. In fact, this very seldom happens. Most audiences are very supportive of presenters - especially those who do their best to give a good performance.

Many presenters find eye contact a major cause of anxiety. Being the focus of numerous sets of eyes as occurs in giving a presentation is an unnerving situation, especially if it is your first time.

b) Thorough preparation

As has been stressed previously, preparation is crucial to success. Thorough preparation will greatly assist in conquering anxiety.

c) Rehearsal and personal coping strategies

- Rehearse in front of a mirror, in front of friends or in front of a video camera. Ask for constructive feedback.
- One of the most powerful tools for enhancing performance is imagery. Mentally rehearsing your presentation using vivid imagery is excellent preparation for the real thing. Visit the lecture theatre or room that you will be using and then visualise yourself in front of the audience. See yourself giving a great presentation. Notice the audience responding positively. Focus particularly on the beginning and the end.
- Regularly practising simple relaxation techniques, such as progressive muscle relaxation, will help you control your anxieties. The appearance of being calm and relaxed will help you establish good rapport with your audience.

For more tips on Overcoming Speaking Anxiety in Meetings and Presentations
<http://www.ljlseminars.com/anxiety.htm>

Before the presentation

Checklist to use before the presentation:

Check your transparencies or slides. Make sure they are in the correct order and that slides are correctly loaded. If possible load slides into an empty magazine of the type to be used, project them to ensure they are in the correct order and the right way around, then seal the magazine and label it with your name.

Check your prompt cards or text.

Check the venue and audiovisual facilities. Practice using the equipment (e.g. slide changer, light pointer, operating the lights, microphone, etc.) during a break in the programme.

Try and sit in on a presentation in the same venue earlier in the day to get a feel for the acoustics and how you should use the audiovisual facilities.

During the presentation

Checklist to use on the day of the presentation:

Walk confidently to the podium and arrange your prompt cards or text. Adjust the microphone and arrange the slide changer, pointers, etc. to your satisfaction.

Begin with an appropriate opening ("Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen").

Present the first few opening sentences without reference to any notes. Look around the audience without making eye contact with any particular individual.

If necessary, dim the lights when your first slide is to appear.

Speak at a rate which sounds slow to you. It will not be too slow for the audience.

Try and use more emphasis than seems natural to your ear - again, it will not sound

too theatrical to the audience. Show enthusiasm by using appropriate hand and facial gestures.

How to gesture effectively

<http://www.ljlseminars.com/gesture.htm>

If you have to use a fixed microphone, do not move away from the microphone when you point something out on the screen.

When you come to the end, say so ("In conclusion, Mr Chairman, I have shown ...". "Finally, ...").

Handling questions

Prepare to handle questions from the audience after the presentation.

Listen carefully to the question.

If the question is complex or if you suspect that not all the audience heard it, restate it clearly and succinctly.

Be brief and to the point in your answer (not another 10 minute presentation!).

Deal with one question at a time.

Don't be afraid to say "I don't know".

Don't make promises you can't keep such as finding out something or sending copies to people.

If a question is particularly awkward or aggressive try to deflect it as best you can. Strategies include agreeing with as much of what was said as possible, acknowledging legitimate differences of opinion or interpretation, or suggesting you meet the questioner later to clarify your position. At all costs avoid a heated head-on

clash in front of your audience. However, do not be afraid to politely disagree with any questioners, however eminent, when you are sure of your ground.

10 Tips on handling hostile questions

<http://www.ljlseminars.com/hostile.htm>

Evaluating the presentation

Use the checklist to evaluate a presentation.

Checklist Evaluation of a presentation

Date: _____ Time: _____ Venue: _____

Presenter: _____

Title of the presentation: _____

Evaluator: _____

5 = strongly agree

4 = agree

3 = no strong feelings

2 = disagree

1 = strongly disagree

0 = not relevant

STRUCTURE

The opening gained attention.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The opening indicated the main aims and main points of the presentation.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The main points were clearly expressed.	5	4	3	2	1	0
Information supporting the main points was clearly stated.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The summary/conclusion brought together the main points.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The conclusions/recommendations were convincing.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The presentation was clearly structured.	5	4	3	2	1	0

PRESENTATION

The speaker could be clearly heard.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The speaker spoke fluently and clearly.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The speaker varied tone and rate of speech to hold attention.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The speaker faced the audience.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The speaker established appropriate eye contact with the audience.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The pace (speed) of the presentation was appropriate.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The speaker effectively controlled the environment. (e.g. use of microphone, controlling lights and equipment, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	0
Audio/visual aids were used effectively.	5	4	3	2	1	0

The speaker adhered to time constraints.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The speaker managed questions well.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The speaker appeared self-confident and enthusiastic.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The speaker seemed well prepared.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The presentation was well presented.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The presentation held my attention.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The presentation was interesting.	5	4	3	2	1	0