

# Presentation skills



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## What are the benefits of presenting your work?

- show case your work/ideas
- engage with and contribute to the wider academic community
- forces clarity in your work
- a way of developing ideas/get constructive feedback
- networking opportunities
- looks good on your CV
- Important life skill to develop
- Satisfaction

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## What makes a conference presentation different from a written report?

- More general audience
- No opportunity for audience to check back so clarity of essence
- More possibility to speculate/make suggestions/sound out ideas but also need to show critical evaluation
- Shorter/less formal sentences
  - However/furthermore/ on the contrary c.f. but/so/then
  - Use of rhetorical questions 'so did it work' 'well sort of'

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## Task 1

- Think about presenting an area of your research and how you might vary this according to the following audiences:
  - A group of third year undergraduate students
  - Academics in your dept
  - An multi-disciplinary international conference
  - A local community group
  - High school students

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## Slick presentation

- Title page
- Purpose of study, brief history
- Procedure
- Findings
- Explanation - evaluation
- Conclusions

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## Planning: Audience

*Who are you giving the talk to?*

- Type of audience
  - Experts
  - Less knowledgeable than yourself
- Audience expectations
  - informal chat / seminar?
  - What do they want to get out of it?
  - What are they interested in? Theory? Methodology? Focus on that
- Your expectations.
  - What key information do you want the audience to go away with? Write it down

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## Planning: Purpose

Why are you giving the talk?

- Present novel concepts
- Build on prior knowledge
- *What do you want to cover?*
  - Introduction to your work
  - Giving an overview
  - Presenting a chapter/ design of a particular study
- *How long have you got?*

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## Organising thoughts

- Order ideas
  - Can use post it notes
  - Give headings
  - Prioritise
  - Further research
- Progress slowly and logically
- Timing
- Number of points
- Number of slides

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## Pruning



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## Planning: Language

- **Having outlined** the problems I'd like to now consider the benefits
- **As in the previous point, the next** also considers multiple approaches.
- **So far we have examined** the partnership and the family relationships. **This leads us to** wider relationships in the community
- **Moving from theory to practice** I'd like to consider how this model is actually used
- **This final point** is crucial to understanding business dynamics.
- **In summary,** we have considered

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### Introduction: Outline what you intend to do

The **purpose** of this presentation is **to highlight the benefits** of the business model,

I will also **point out some draw backs** and **demonstrate** its **suitability** for small enterprises in the New Zealand context

### Conclusion: Summarise the main concepts discussed and affirm you have demonstrated what you set out to do.

So, in this presentation **I have shown you** the benefits of the business model, **namely, .....** I have also provided an **overview** of the **different arguments for and against the model.**

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## Pronunciation-pedagogy/immobilisation

- Reason
- Concern
- Symptom
- Disease
- The crisis is in the cities
- Health care
- Telephone equipment
- A system failure
- A fatal disease
- His current interests

(Reinhart, 2002)

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## Have you ever listened to a lecture / public talk / student presentation that was poorly presented?

### What was it about the presentation that you did not like?

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXILl9Q1jIw>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9so7xvS2Nc&feature=related>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YivQYei0vys>

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## Delivery

- Enthusiasm
- Confidence
  - Presentation/manner
- Eye contact
  - Audience/paper
- Speed/pausing
- Intonation/stress/pronunciation
- Gestures/idiosyncrasies
- Positioning yourself

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## Delivery Tips

### Practise

- Read out loud, vary voice pitch, pause, read slowly, practise pronunciation.
- Do mock presentation in front of others several times.
- Become familiar with technology – OHT, logging into computer for powerpoint, etc. Check compatibility/loading/markers/laser pens
- Use key notes that are easy to read e.g small cards/don't memorise entire talk

### Clarity

- Use short sentences with simple constructions.
- Supplement presentation with a handout.

### Timing

- The longer the talk, the more freedom to explore the topic.
- The shorter the talk, the more direct and succinct.
- **DON'T GO OVER TIME**

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## The X-Factor

- Begin with something humorous or interesting!
  - Captures audience for the long-haul
  - Use anecdote, personalised information
  - Something humorous that happened on your way to the conference, people understanding your accent.
  - Something inspirational-an image?
  - Simply raise a question 'have you ever thought about ...?'
- Remember the 1<sup>st</sup> line

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## Conclusions

- Think about the purpose (apart from summing up the content of the presentation)
  - Re-emphasize the far-ranging impact of your study
  - Stress the importance of your topic to the listeners' daily lives
  - Leave the audience with a question to think about
  - End with a recommendation/a hope for the future
  - Mention something that you weren't able to include in your presentation but you hope to be able to discuss in the future
  - End with a humorous statement related to the topic
    - Good idea to also rehearse this line

(Reinhart, 2002)

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## Managing Anxiety

### Put it in perspective

- Remember, everyone else is feeling nervous too and adrenaline sharpens you.
- Remember the audience is interested in **what** you say not **who** you are
- Remember also that most of the calamities we imagine don't actually happen!
- Don't try to emulate lecturers

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## Managing Anxiety

### *Be well prepared*

- Make sure you are comfortable with the subject matter
- Make sure you have attended plenty of presentations yourself, pay attention and learn, ask questions
- Practise your talk many times so that it becomes second nature.
- Have something in your hand if necessary
- Remember the first and last line, not the whole talk

### *Manage the moment*

- Self belief/visualise yourself
- Focus on the task at hand/the moment
- Take the 'I' out of it

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## Task 2-Dealing with questions

- Decide if you want to leave all questions to the end, it may be less distracting
- Get a colleague to ask the first question
- Anticipate the sort of questions you will be asked by judging the audience and raise them in the presentation
  - Especially statistics, methodology, complex theory
- Be clear about the scope of your study, this gives you a justification for not answering certain questions
- Try to be very present, listen very carefully the feedback/discussion is very useful

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## Handling difficult questions

- Repeat the question back to give you and the audience thinking time
- Seek clarification
- Thank the person for raising an interesting issue
- Deflect, e.g. any suggestions?
- Tell the person you will discuss it with them later
- Be honest and say if you don't know the answer, you can offer to find out

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## What to look out for from the audience

- Sorry, I'm not following
- Could you say a bit more about ...
- I didn't get that
- Sorry you've lost me
- I didn't catch that last part
- Can you run that by me again
- I'm a bit lost

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## Resources

- ❖ *Public speaking for dummies* (1999); *Successful presentations for dummies* (1996) by Malcolm Kushner – how to handle questions and making your point with humour.
- ❖ *Public speaking* (2005) by Patsy Rowe.
- ❖ *Public speaking in business : How to make a success of meetings, speeches, conferences, and all business presentations* (1991) by Stuart Turner.
- ❖ *Public speaking : Theory into practice* (1995) by John Makay.
- ❖ *Giving academic presentations* (2002) by Susan Reinhart.

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