

Presentations in English – Teacher’s Notes by Erica Williams

Step 1

Lay solid foundations

Overall objective

Learners have the skills and confidence to give a basic presentation in English and have begun to reflect on their own presentation style.

Specific objectives

Learners:

- know why an effective start is important and what basic information is given at the start of a presentation
- can start a presentation fluently and confidently
- know why an effective finish is important and what kind of information is given at the end of a presentation
- can finish a presentation fluently and confidently
- understand why signposting is an effective basic technique
- can use some basic signposting language
- have had fun building some basic presentations
- have experienced giving feedback
- have given a full presentation and received peer and trainer feedback
- have identified their own strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement

Tips

1. Attention curve graph

Page 9

Answer Key page 100

Once students know and understand this curve, they understand why getting off to a good start and finishing effectively are essential and why they need to practise, practise, practise both these sections of the presentation from the very beginning.

Kick off the training by putting the empty graph diagram on page 9 onto the board or flip-chart and get 3-5 participants to draw in the curve. Use different colour chalk or pens so that you can distinguish the curves. Let participants explain their curves. Normally, this starts a discussion and you can then point out who has the correct curve or nearest to the correct curve. Explain the attention curve using the information on page 100.

Use the curve extensively throughout training as it helps to explain why presenters use techniques. Techniques help to raise the curve or maintain the curve at a high level at points where audience attention could otherwise be low.

2. Start

Pages 9 – 13

Brainstorm what information to give at the start before you do the exercises or read the text. You will probably find that many students give you correct answers. Concentrate on extracting the basics – who, why, what, how. Participants may start to mention techniques here. If so, write the techniques on the board or flip-chart so that you can refer to them later.

However, many quote the theory but do not make effective starts in reality. This emphasises the need for practice. Ensure students do the *Find Your Voice* activity on page 11. It is best to iron out mistakes and practise until students start effectively and confidently.

Have students highlight 5 or 6 phrases on page 11 that they like and tell them to concentrate on learning these. Once they are using the phrases automatically, they can go back to the list and select new vocabulary.

Do this with other lists of phrases in the book. This enables students to build an extensive presentations vocabulary. This is an ongoing process that can be done as homework or as a self-study activity.

3. Finish

Pages 14–16

Brainstorm what to do at the end of a presentation and make sure that participants understand the difference between summary and conclusion. Again, many can give you the answers in theory but do not distinguish between summary and conclusion in practice.

Not giving a conclusion is like having a car with no wheels. The body may glisten and the technology may be magnificent but it is all worthless if you never reach your destination. The conclusion is the take-home message and linked to the ‘why’ at the start. There are many objectives. The presenter may want to recommend a course of action, assign tasks, persuade the audience, change a way of thinking, give greater understanding of an issue, motivate a team, provide new or extra information and so on, and so on Presenters must learn to think carefully about the objective(s), the final message and how to design a presentation to guide and lead an audience to this message. The sooner you get trainees to consider these points the better. Ensure students do the *Find Your Voice* activity on page 15 and give students feedback and enough time to practise until thinking about ‘take-home message’ is second nature.

4. Signposting

Page 17

Firstly, it is important for students to understand the reasons why we chunk information into clear points that are easy for the listening audience to follow and why we use signposting to indicate the structuring of these points. The text and diagram, ‘How do signposts work?’ are key to this understanding. Once students understand why they use a technique, they learn to implement it. Secondly, students should concentrate on basic signposting at this point and learn just a few simple phrases that they can practise until they use them fluently and effortlessly. They can then move on to learning new phrases and extending their range.

5. Find Your Voice

Page 16

If you are working with a group, do not miss this exercise out. Participants work with their peers in a stress-free environment (students can sit around a table for example) and consolidate the basics. Moreover, students have a lot of fun as they can present any subject (oranges, pears and bananas; red, blue and white for instance). This builds confidence for giving a first full presentation in front of the group.

6. Analysis of César’s presentation

Pages 19 and 20

Peer analysis is essential. Presenters learn to analyse what works and doesn’t work, what they like and don’t like and ultimately what ingredients are necessary in cooking up a successful presentation. However, some are reluctant to give negative remarks and find it difficult to give balanced and constructive feedback. Students analyse a DVD presentation in every Step and this analysis of a third party presentation enables them to build the skills and confidence to give feedback to others in their group.

7. Presentations diary

Page 22

The diary is tucked away at the bottom of the page but this is an essential exercise if students are to assess performance and improve their future presentations. Find the time to do the exercise in training or self-study and to go over the answers with every student, if possible. There are no right or wrong exercises and every individual will find the answers that work for him or her. This will enable you to give the feedback each student requires.

Student presentations

What to look for:

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Use the Feedback Form on page 22 and concentrate on the points mentioned. If you are working with a group, different members of the group can also concentrate on different sections of the form and give feedback.

What is essential is that presenters can make a fluent effective start and finish, structure their information into clear points and signpost this structure. By the end of this step, students should have enough confidence to stand in front of a group and/or video camera and give a short basic presentation.

Any additional techniques that presenters use can be highlighted in feedback.

What to worry about:

- no basic procedure in starts and finishes
- lack of confidence to even give this basic presentation
- totally incomprehensible delivery (e.g. pronunciation, fast speed)
- no structure in the presentation

What not to worry about:

These are not the focus at this stage:

- main content
- visual information
- Q&A