Presentations in English – Teacher's Notes

Step 2
Connect with your audience

Overall objective
Learners can 'connect with their audience' by using and adapting a number of techniques at the starts and finishes of their presentations.

Specific objectives
Learners:
- can recognise a variety of 'jump start' techniques
- have an understanding of which technique is suitable for which kind of presentation
- know how to integrate techniques into an effective basic start
- have examined a number of 'finish with a bang' techniques
- understand the importance of 'finishing with a bang'
- have had practice and fun integrating different techniques into various presentation starts and finishes
- understand what 'verbal garbage' is and have awareness of any personal 'verbal garbage'
- can present clearly about the past, present and future
- have given a full presentation and received peer and trainer feedback
- have identified techniques they can use successfully and have set targets for using further techniques

Tips

1. **Jump start – Introduction**

Page 24
'Jump start' is sometimes known as 'ice-breaker'. Learners may be already using some techniques or have seen other presenters using techniques. Some may have learnt a technique but use this time and again without keeping the audience and/or type of presentation in mind. If learners mention techniques that are not mentioned elsewhere in this unit, these can be discussed and added to the learners' skill bank.

Attention should be drawn to the use of 'jokes' though. Jokes may not work on a cross-cultural level and it is probably best to avoid these, particularly at the start of a presentation as presenters can run the risk of alienating the audience at the very beginning

of their presentation. There is a difference between joke and humour and this can be discussed. Humour may work whereas a joke may not.

Some may have learnt to use techniques but do not make their 'ice-breakers' relevant to the presentation and/or make the relevance of the jump start explicit. This is essential. If a presenter uses a technique but not does indicate how it is relevant, s/he achieves the opposite effect as the ice-breaker just hangs in the air. The audience is left wondering what the start was all about and does not then concentrate as the presenter goes into the main content sections of the presentation. Jump starts can be used in any section of the start but they often work best when linked (explicitly) to the 'Why'.

There is evidence that shows the use of jump start combined with basic 'who, why, what, how' should not last longer than 3 minutes and that a presenter begins to lose the audience if s/he does not begin with the main content of the presentation within this time.

2. Hot tips to 'jump start' your presentation

Pages 24–25
Completing the exercises is not difficult although there may be some confusion about the difference between 'enrolment questions' and 'question and answer' and many do not understand the word 'enrolment'.

Enrolment questions are interactive and the presenter gets the audience to say or do something – to enrol members of the audience into the group. This technique works better with smaller audiences since it can be difficult to get a 'group' feeling at larger gatherings, a conference for instance, where members of an audience may not be able to hear or even see other members of the audience.

The question and answer technique is not interactive as the presenter asks a question and goes on to answer it him/herself or indicates s/he will answer it during the course of the presentation. This is a technique that can be used when addressing larger audiences. It is advisable to maintain 2 to 3 seconds of silence after each question which helps to engage listeners and build anticipation. Nevertheless, presenters must make sure they go on to answer their own questions because the audience becomes confused and frustrated if answers are not given.

The information about type of presentation and size of audience for each technique should be emphasised. It is important for learners to realise that they need a number of techniques at hand which can be adapted for different presentations.

3. Techniques

Pages 26–28
The practice activities in A, B, C and the *Find Your Voice* section on page 28 are vital. Learners will only take techniques on board if they have time and scope for practice and

can begin to develop a feel for what is working for them. Knowing, understanding and recognising techniques are not enough.

Exercise D is essential if students are to understand the context for César's full presentation on page 32. Students may not find the opening statement provocative themselves but it is crucial to realise that the statement is shocking for the audience, César's peers, and that the technique is applied successfully.

Exercise E on the same page is also very useful as students can learn that combining techniques is not very difficult and a little careful preparation can really help improve a presentation.

4. Grammar – Future continuous

Page 29
Native speakers frequently use the future continuous at the start of a presentation, particularly when giving the 'Why' and 'What'. You can check this by watching native speaker presentations at events or on the internet. Non-native speakers can have problems to understand the use of the tense. Advanced speakers may understand the tense but do not use it actively. Nevertheless, learners can be encouraged to use it at the starts of their presentations and they can do this without even truly understanding the full use of the tense.

5. Finish with a bang

Page 30 and Answer Key page 105
The examples are not exhaustive and students may well have other examples of good finishes they have seen or even given themselves. The Answer Key gives the features of a 'finish with a bang' and the most essential of these are relevance and intensifying the conclusion. All the examples given on page 30 show a clear relevance and link to the presentation and final take-home message.

The *Find Your Voice* section on this page is again vital as is the section on page 31. Students cannot get enough practice and it is advisable not to skip these sections. Learners should be encouraged to be creative and experiment. They could well find that they are more creative than they realise and that they can take a bigger risk than they thought possible.

6. Verbal garbage

Page 31
Many of us have verbal garbage and fill our presentations with phrases such as 'you know', 'right', 'OK' or simply with noises such as 'Hum …'. It is firstly useful for learners to be able to give a name to this habit so that they can give effective feedback throughout their training. Students need to get this feedback as they probably only

become aware of personal verbal garbage once they receive feedback and/or see video of their own performance. Analysing Dan's work on his verbal garbage helps learners appreciate that eliminating verbal garbage takes some time and that awareness is only the first step on the road to improvement.

7. Analysis of César's presentation

Page 32
Many feel that César's Step 2 presentation is not as good as the one in Step 1. This is not a negative aspect as students can feel they are going backwards as well as forwards. Indeed, they may need to go backwards on occasion in order to move forwards. Analysing César can underline this point.

César does not fully stick to the brief. Emphasise the importance of the presentation briefs in each Step. They are carefully designed to exploit skills that have been gained and to utilise optimum structure. This particular brief is important as presenters should present timelines and grammatical accuracy needs to be checked.

César's use of the flip chart is not too effective. Presenting visual material is the subject matter of Step 3 and you do not need to dwell too long on analysing César's interaction with the flip-chart here.

Students find the jump start effective if they have done D on page 26. The lack of 'bang' in the finish should be commented on.

8. Presentations diary

Page 34
The diary is again tucked away at the bottom of the page but stress once more that it is an essential exercise if students are to assess performance and improve their future presentations. Here, learners identify what has worked successfully for them and reassess what they can experiment with in future presentations.

Student presentations

What to look for:
Use the Feedback Form on page 34 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 integrate techniques whilst still giving a good basic presentation. If the use of technique confuses or distracts from the presentation or the final message is lost in a sea of gimmicky technique, there is need for further practice.

On the other hand, a complete resistance to the use of technique also needs to be addressed.

The presentation brief calls for presenters to present a timeline and learners need to be able to present clearly about the past, present and future. Inability to do so impairs performance and makes the presentation unclear. Remedial grammar work may be necessary.

What to worry about:
- total resistance to the use of technique
- use of technique that is irrelevant or unsuitable
- inability to present clearly about the past, present and future

What not to worry about:
These are not the focus at this stage:
- use of technique during main content stages (if students do try it out, applaud the experimentation without commenting on effectiveness)
- elimination of verbal garbage (awareness and feedback are more important here)
- visual information
- Q&A