

## Presentations in English – Teacher’s Notes

### Step 5

#### Top up your techniques

##### Overall objective

Learners develop the content of their presentations and take their presentations to a new level – they become ‘master presenters’.

##### Specific objectives

Learners:

- use positive dramatic language at key points in their presentations
- use language effectively to outline positive and negative factors intensifying the presentation message
- recognise that the use of simile, metaphor and analogy is effective
- have begun to incorporate simile, metaphor and analogy into their presentations
- have practised telling stories and anecdotes
- appreciate that story telling is an effective technique
- have given a convincing message in a full presentation

##### Tips

#### 1. Structure of the Step

There are two main sections in this Step. ‘Be positive’ deals with effective use of language and ‘Be dramatic’ deals with ‘master presenter’ techniques.

#### 2. Be positive

Pages 62 to 65

The exercises are designed to encourage presenters to think about using vocabulary and grammar to convey exact meaning and message. Presenters need to be able to balance advantages and disadvantages, giving weight to proposals and downplaying other options.

‘Power Words’ helps learners to think about choosing exactly the right powerful word at the right time. There is a lot of difference between *you will love this product* and *you will like this product*, for instance. Starts of presentations are more effective when *you* is introduced. At certain stages, presenters need to find just the right word for dramatic effect.

The 'Grammar' exercise prompts students to think about using grammar - conditional sentences here - purposefully and meaningfully. There is also some guidance on structure as it is best to outline the options you don't want first and to build up to the preferred option as the last proposal. The presenter should outline strong disadvantages and weak advantage(s) on options s/he wishes to reject and strong advantages and weak disadvantage(s) on the option s/he wishes to accept.

This theme is continued in 'Convincing language' which examines choice of vocabulary, the use of full forms and using auxiliaries. All too often, presenters hide their proposals behind a screen of wishy-washy tentative language. Persuasive (spoken) presentation should leave the audience convinced with a clear sense of message and purpose. There is a difference between *I hope you understood my recommendation* and *The option I strongly recommend is ...*. If the presenter does not sound convinced, how can s/he expect the audience to be convinced?

### 3. Be dramatic

Pages 66 and 67

The ideas in the text are new for many learners. Some are not convinced but the text is an eye-opener for others. Discuss the text and the questions on page 67 in detail and gauge students' reactions. It is advisable to begin to take steps to overcome any resistance as most kinds of presentation benefit from use of simile, metaphor or analogy and it is a mistake to think that these are not components of 'serious' presentation. You can point out that learners can have a lot of fun doing the exercises in this section and that exercises on story-telling are good for practising fluency even if students cannot yet imagine doing this in actual presentations.

Page 68

Do not skip exercises A and C even if students are dismissing the use of imagery. C is more difficult but allow students the time they need to produce the extended metaphors. Learners have a lot of fun with these exercises and this can be an important step to acceptance of technique. Exercise B is interesting as Zhan was very resistant to using imagery at first but his conclusions in his final interview (Step 7 page 98 exercise D, 7.02) show that he realised that the use of imagery had made his presentation more interesting and more comprehensible for a lay audience.

Page 69 and 70

The stories on page 69 and 70 are taken from different sources and can be introduced as a step on the road to using successful anecdotes and personal stories as students can find it easier to tell a 'third-party' story than a personal anecdote.

Svitlana's Step 5 presentation can be criticised but her use of story-telling is good. The Circus Elephants story is a well-known management story and Svitlana makes a good link between the story and her subject, environmental issues.

The three stories on page 70 are different kinds of stories about failure. The first is a well-known factual story that could be taken from a newspaper or book, the second is a fable and the third a personal story. The choice of story can be revealing when students do the *Find Your Voice* exercise at the bottom of the page.

Page 71

#### Self-Disclosure

Some differentiate between their business and personal lives and are uncomfortable divulging anything personal in a presentation. There are different ways of seeing this. If a presenter is uncomfortable, it's likely that this uneasiness will come across during the presentation. On the other hand, these presenters may never truly connect with their audiences and should learn to overcome their barriers.

You can show internet presentations of business leaders to help persuade students of the effectiveness of story-telling. Steve Jobs' commencement address at Stanford University in 2005 is a good example. His speech is built around three very personal stories, including his dismissal from Apple and cancer diagnosis.

In any case, the *Find Your Voice* 'Just a Minute' exercise is a good fluency exercise and students should attempt this.

### 4. Zhan's Step 1 and Step 5 presentations

Page 71

Comparing the two presentations is another interesting and revealing exercise. The answers from your learners will show how far or how little they have changed their awareness, opinions and attitudes since reading the text on pages 66 and 67.

### 5. Analysis of Dan's presentation

Page 72

There is an argument that Dan 'finds his voice' in his Step 5 presentation and it is interesting to compare his performance to his Step 1 presentation. Dan puts on a business face in Step 1. He fails to connect with his audience, presents dry slides and stumbles over his words. In Step 5, he comes to life. He is authentic and engages and interacts with his audience. Dan appears to have found a presentation style that suits his personality despite making a number of grammatical errors. Exercise C, in which learners compare Dan's and Svitlana's Step 5 presentations, is also very useful in assessing the aspect of a presenter finding his/her voice.

### 6. Presentations diary

Page 74

Again, stress this is important and monitor your students' answers.

## **Student presentations**

### **What to look for:**

Use the Feedback Form on page 74 and concentrate on the points mentioned. If you are working with a group, different members of the group can also concentrate on listening for the use of different techniques for different presentations.

Presenters should give a clear strong proposal and they should do this by using a clear structure and by using some of the techniques introduced in this Step.

### **What to worry about:**

- lack of convincing and dramatic language at key points in the presentation
- imbalance of argumentation
- lack of clarity on what the presenter wants the audience to do and/or accept

### **What not to worry about:**

- complete resistance to using 'master presenter' techniques as some will need months or even years of practice to accept these
- Q&A is again not a focus at this stage but you can introduce Q&A session practice (see Step 7)