

## Presentations in English – Teacher’s Notes

### Step 7

### Questions are a big opportunity, aren’t they?

#### Overall objective

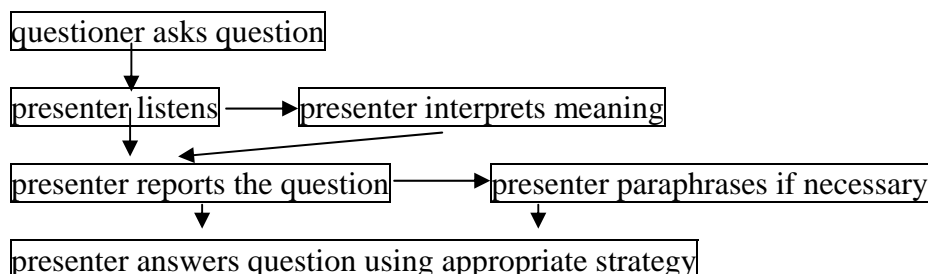
Learners can handle questions or question and answer sessions effectively.

#### Specific objectives

Learners:

- learn about the timing of questions and how this is related to personal presentation style and type of presentation
- learn how to report and paraphrase questions
- develop a range of strategies to answer questions
- analyse Q&A
- develop awareness of question types
- practise Q&A
- give a full interactive presentation

Note: This complete Step or the intermittent stages of effective Q&A could be handled at various points in a training programme depending on the importance of questions for your learners. The stages of effective Q&A are:



#### Tips

##### 1. Answer key

The Answer Key has answers, tips and strategies and should be consulted extensively throughout the unit.

##### 2. Introduction

Page 89

Presenters often believe that they cannot prepare for questions. This is not true. The exercises on this page are a first step in preparation. Presenters should consider the timing of questions which can be allowed at different stages of a presentation:

- at any time

- after every point
- at the end

This timing depends on a number of factors, including personality, type of presentation and level of English. Learners should be aware of these factors and plan Q&A accordingly.

The questions and the statements should be discussed in detail as they explore attitudes to Q&A. The questions have some guideline answers in the key and most learners can find a statement or statements that reflect their preferences or experience. Get your students to describe times when they have given interactive presentations or have left questions to the end, for example.

### **3. Reporting questions**

Pages 90 and 91

It should be noted that listening to a question precedes reporting the question. This can be a difficult skill in presentation as the presenter has to switch from being active speaker to being active listener. This takes practice. Once the presenter has listened to a question, the presenter should take the time to report the question. This clarifies intent and meaning and can give the presenter extra thinking time. Reporting involves changing a question into a statement and paraphrasing, if necessary. The advantages of paraphrasing are outlined on page 91.

### **4. Answering strategies**

Pages 92 and 93

Your students need strategies. They need to recognise the type of question and any possible hidden meaning and then use the appropriate strategy. Analysing and practising this builds skills and confidence.

The first part of A - choosing the best response - is not a difficult exercise. The second part - defining the strategy - is not so easy. Indeed, many presenters have never considered strategy in dealing with Q&A, even in their mother tongue. There is a detailed analysis of the strategies in the Answer Key and you should discuss these fully with your students. This discussion is often an eye-opener as students begin to realise that they can control Q&A. Once you have done this, learners should be able to do the matching exercise on page 93. This analysis helps learners work on their own performance and eventually think on their feet when giving presentations.

### **5. Hidden meanings**

Page 94

This is an awareness-building exercise to help learners appreciate that audiences can have a number of agendas. Questioners do not always ask good questions. The presenter may not even have to answer the question. These are factors your learners may never have considered.

The exercise takes some work to complete and it should be pointed out that the explanations are not definitive. Context and tonality would also play a role. So, there are many more hidden agendas you can discuss. There are no absolute rights and wrongs here as the objective is to build awareness.

## 6. Find Your Voice

Page 97

The aims here are to demonstrate to learners that they can be prepared for the unprepared and rehearse Q&A. This builds confidence and students really benefit from the exercise. Indeed, many ask to repeat the exercise and to do it outside of a presentations training brief.

It is important that presenters prepare different kinds of questions - those they perceive as difficult, so-so and easy (red, amber and green) questions. When members of the audience ask questions, they should choose questions at random, mixing red, amber and green questions.

## 7. Analysis of César's presentation

This is a final presentation and students should give feedback on all aspects of presentation, not just Q&A. You may need to do some revision work when you introduce the feedback form.

Ask:

Has César convinced and persuaded you?

Has César found his voice as a presenter?

## Student presentations

### What to look for:

Use the Feedback Form on page 98.

The presentation is a final presentation in which learners use the techniques, language and structure that work best for them whilst giving an interactive presentation. They should be authentic and find their voice. If you are working with a group, you should thus see a variety of presentations.

Presenters should be able to successfully integrate Q&A into their presentation, clarifying for different levels of English in the audience. If others are reluctant to ask questions, you can lead Q&A, ensuring there are one or two questions that require the presenter to clarify and explain meaning. Alternatively, presenters can prepare questions for the audience by using the form in A in the *Find Your Voice* exercise on page 95.

You can set the presentation as a competition in which the group chooses the best presentation. Peers should be able to give full and extensive feedback at this stage. It could also be assigned for assessment on a university or other study course.

### What to worry about:

- no questions
- presenters being unable to prepare their own presentation as the brief leaves scope for presenters to work autonomously and find their voice
- lack of extensive feedback

### What not to worry about:

- less than 'perfect' presentation – this is still a training environment and you are looking for improvement not perfection

### **The future**

This depends on your training situation and if you are going to continue to work with your learner(s) or not. In any case, you should point out that improvement is an ongoing process and encourage learners to revisit (sections of) the book. Completing C in the presentations diary on page 98 should help students continue along the road of finding their voice.

Presenters can compare their comments to those made by Dan, Svitlana, Zhan and César in their final interviews.