

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT



Course name:	Comprehension skills
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PRESENTATION SKILLS

MAIN POINTS:

- Introduction
- Objectives
- Definitions
- Preparation
- Form of language
- Visual aids / material for distribution Verbal (voice, intonation, appropriate language)
- Non-verbal (eye-contact, body language, hand gestures)
- Interacting with audience and managing questions Handling nerves.
- Rehearsal
- Feedback.

INTRODUCTION:

Well-developed presentation skills enable you to communicate clearly, precisely and effectively in a variety of modes or registers and settings. It should be pointed out that they are rated as one of the most important soft skills. The ability of communicating with the audience and giving presentations should be seen as a mandatory prerequisite for both the effective learning process and the successful working life.

Thus, it is imperative to gradually increase and enhance your presentation skills through a continuous training that will help you to become more competent, confident and competitive.

The purpose of this chapter which is based on the best Western practices is to help to develop your presentation skills. It first introduces the basic premises of giving a presentation by examining in details its preparation, structure, timing, form of delivery and language, equipment and facilities, visual aids and material for distribution. The subsequent sections cover more specific topics including verbal (voice, intonation, appropriate language) and non-verbal communication (eye-contact, body language, hand gestures) communication, interacting with audience and answering questions, handling your nerves during the presentation. The chapter concludes by focusing on rehearsal activities and different forms of feedback which will enhance your presentation skills.

OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ to reinforce your performance skills (verbal and non-verbal);
- ❖ to increase your confidence level in interacting with audience and control your nervousness;
- ❖ to promote critical and reflective thinking by dealing with feedback on your presentation skills.

DEFINITION:

1.Information giving: This is predominantly descriptive, giving or summarizing information. You may be asked to do this as part of a mini-teaching session, sharing theoretical or factual information. Here the point is to see what you have understood and how you have extracted the main facts from your reading and to relay these to the group. You will need to make decisions about what information to include.

2.Discursive: Here you will need to debate the strengths and limitations of an approach or develop an argument, exploring and weighing up different perspectives, challenging your audience to accept a different viewpoint.

3.Demonstrative:

This type of presentation tends to be used in the context of training: for example, when demonstrating your ability to illustrate your understanding of a technique or teaching a practical skill to others.

Presentations are key activities and might include:

- Group and individual presentations for a given topic as part of a module assessment.
- Seminar presentations giving a paper to an academic or your peers for the purpose of teaching or showing evidence of your understanding of the topic.
- Providing an overview of some research carried out by you or your group.
- Demonstrating the use of a piece of equipment or software such as PowerPoint to show that you have developed the essential skills to use it appropriately.

- Dissertation-related presentations and Vivas to demonstrate your ability to manage a research project.

PREPARATION:

Usually, the majority feel nervous when presenting something. It is mainly due to the fact that in a live presentation there is no second chance. Plus, you should be aware that the way in which information or ideas are delivered strongly affects how they are understood by the audience. Even tiny inaccuracies in presentation can make it hard to follow. Thus, for communication to take place effectively presented information has to be received as intended by the speaker – and not misinterpreted.

Though some of you might be better suited to giving a presentation than your colleagues, actually this is not a skill which you either have or do not have at birth and anyone can be good at presentations. The best presentations are focused with a precise aim and the supplied information is appropriate and addresses the clear-cut, unambiguous question.

Thus, before you start working on the presentation, answer the following questions:

- What is the main aim of the presentation and what message you want to deliver to the audience in the time limit set?
- What is the current knowledge level of the audience and what new knowledge or awareness do you want the audience to have gained from your presentation?
- What is the most effective way to communicate this knowledge?

STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION:

As a very general principle, the rule of three is offered.

1. Tell them what you are going to tell them.
2. Tell them.
3. Tell them what you have told them.

FORM OF LANGUAGE:

It is important to recognize and respond to the difference between formal written language and spoken language. When giving a presentation it is not obligatory to use complicated language constructions, to use long words, or to speak in nested and convoluted sentences. If you choose to speak in a way that does not necessarily come naturally to you, or is in some way made more complicated than it needs to be, you will in all probability not communicate effectively. Use natural language.

Visual aids:

Help audiences understand the presentation itself. Emphasize different parts of the presentation. Take the pressure off the speaker. For a brief while all eyes are on something else for a moment. This is a good thing. Use images to improve understanding. If you use more pictures and diagrams than text, you will possibly help the audience to understand better what you are saying. This is because after three days an audience will have retained 7% of what they read (bullet points, or other notes on the screen), but 55% of what they saw pictorially (charts, pictures, diagrams).

You should remember that your voice is an incredible tool. On average 7% of what the audience understand comes from the words that are used within the verbal interactions, compared with 38% of information resulting in tone of voice and 55% being dependent on non-verbal cues.

NON-VERBAL (eye contact, body language, hand gestures):

It is advisable to maintain eye contact with your audience at least 90% of the time. Eyes are one of your best tools for involving the audience in what you are saying. Good posture, movement and gestures will be of little use if you fail to support them with appropriate eye contact. Great presenters understand that eye contact is critical to building trust, credibility, and rapport. Body language can encourage people to listen to what you are saying. Hand gestures and facial expressions can be used to your advantage to emphasize particular points. Using your hands can help in the same way that whole body movements can: to relax, stimulate and illustrate. If you find it hard to use your hands naturally, then the best policy is to hold them by your sides.

INTERACTING WITH AUDIENCE AND MANAGING QUESTIONS:

If you provide time at the end and stimulate a question-and-answer session sometime during your presentation it can really help you to ensure that you cover or clarify areas that you simply did not know required clarification. When you do accept a question, your **listening skills** will be important. If you do receive a rude, hostile or discourteous question that appears to be an attack on you, then do try and stay calm. Many people get nervous when they speak in front of others. Having nerves is good as this gets the adrenaline flowing and keeps you alert and on top of the subject. You may find that you are nervous at the beginning of the talk until you get into the swing of it and then you are fine. Be positive about yourself. Avoid apologizing for yourself.

REHEARSAL:

The more you prepare you more you are likely to succeed. And knowing that you have prepared will reduce your nerves. It is suggested that for every minute you are on your feet when presenting you will need an hour's preparation. Rehearse speaking aloud so that you can hear the sound level.

FEEDBACK:

Presentation skills require much feedback and the preparation for next presentation should be based on feedback from the last.

THANKS