

# Language & Learning Skills Unit

## Presentations – Effective Interactive

### Sharing your research

#### Why have presentations?

Presentations can be a very effective way of sharing information with a group of people. They are increasingly becoming a necessary skill for professional artists across all of the disciplines.

This brochure goes through a way of presenting information to a group that takes into account both a student's reluctance to speak in public and the audience's need to be involved.

#### Ineffective presentations

Because people can be nervous when they speak in front of a group there is a tendency to:

- read from a prepared script, effectively hiding themselves from the group
- direct their presentation to the tutor or lecturer and therefore ignore the rest of the group
- present highly complex material in a very abstract way, which no one else can follow
- think of themselves, and not the needs of their audience.

#### Effective presentations

An effective presenter is just as nervous as an ineffective one, but the orientation of the presentation is towards their audience. That is, effective presenters:

- use notes as a support, but for the most part speak directly to the group
- direct their presentations to everyone
- present complex material as simply as possible and illustrate points with concrete examples
- provide other forms of information support, such as handouts, writing key elements on a whiteboard, showing images etc.
- see themselves as responsible for the group.

#### Interactive presentations

The best way to explore new information is by doing something with it. An interactive presentation includes some kind of activity where the audience considers what is being presented. This can be in the form of a discussion, an analytical task, or a interactive performance that illustrates an idea or concept. In this way,

- the presenter is not forced to be centre stage all the time
- the audience gets to be actively involved in the presentation.

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There are a few key points that need to be attended to for an effective interactive segment of a presentation.

- People need time to think before they can engage meaningfully. Before initiating a whole group discussion or activity, it is a good idea for the participants to review the topic in smaller groups.
- Depending on the complexity of the task, small group discussion can be in pairs, threes or fours. Try to make sure all in the small group can see and hear each other.
- Think through very carefully what you are asking individuals/groups to do. Make sure it is achievable and that it will not threaten anyone.
- The most successful discussions/activities are those that do not have a right or wrong answer but are still working within the concepts/ideas being presented.
- If you have a number of groups working in a room, make sure each group is doing something different. This means that any feedback you ask for will not be repetitious.
- You will get more responses if you annotate what is said on a whiteboard. This shows the group you are doing something with their contribution. This will also help you summarise the feedback at the end of the discussion.

## Structure of interactive presentations

### Introduction

Present an overview of the presentation structure. This will let your audience know what to expect.

### Concept

Present your key concept/s as clearly as possible, using as many modes of communication as possible: visual, aural, textual and tactile.

### Application

This related to your interactive segment. It is a good idea to model what you will be expecting the group to do.

### Interactivity

Divide the audience into smaller groups, and explain the task they will be performing and how long it should take. Once the groups have started, visit each one briefly and, if necessary, provide some ideas as to how they might proceed.

### Feedback

Call for feedback from each group, and summarise this feedback on the whiteboard. Where possible write down exactly what is said, as this further validates the responses received. Accept all responses, and be positive.

### Summary and Conclusion

Drawing on the annotated feedback, review the key concepts you presented and link them to those relevant to the interactive exercise.