



Your library

Study Skills Student Information Sheet: **Developing Presentation Skills**

Introduction

The thought of delivering a presentation to an audience of your peers can often cause high levels of anxiety. This information sheet will suggest strategies for developing effective presentation skills and reducing the stress associated with public speaking.

Links:

Time Management, Understanding Feedback, Revision

The thought of giving a presentation can fill even the most accomplished speakers with dread. There are however strategies you can use to help you to feel well-prepared and therefore more confident about your forthcoming presentation.

There are 3 main areas for consideration:

- **You**
- **Your material**
- **Your audience**

You:

If you are feeling nervous and anxious, this will be reflected in your posture, facial expressions and voice

Relax

If you appear relaxed, this will help you to feel more relaxed, which in turn will help your posture, expressions and voice.

Visualise all of your muscles in turn and ensure that they are relaxed. This also helps to take your mind off your anxiety.

Breathe

When we are anxious, our breathing becomes more shallow, which leads us to feel more tense. Deep breathing can help us to feel calm.

Stop what you are doing and breathe in slowly from your tummy, hold it for a second or two and then breathe out slowly.

Speech exercises

Stretching your facial muscles, particularly around your mouth, and your vocal chords will help you to articulate your words.

Exercise your lips, jaw and tongue: OO, EE, OW;
Chew imaginary gum;
Stick out your tongue and try to touch your chin, cheek, nose and other cheek.

Your material:

Being well-prepared is key to feeling confident about your presentation.

Make sure that you:

- Create a mind map on the topic to ensure you have thought of everything
- Structure your presentation so you have a clear beginning, middle and end
- Give clear headings to your slides to keep your audience informed at all times
- Keep your points concise and succinct
- Use props and make it interactive
- Rehearse

Your audience:

One of the best ways to calm your nerves is to engage with your audience early on:

- Ensure that your room is set up before anyone arrives so that you feel prepared and in control
- Talk to members of the audience as they come in. This will help to remind you that they are human!
- Smile and breathe
- Introduce yourself and your presentation
- Set your audience a short task early on to take the focus off you and give you time to relax!

Final thought

The best way to improve your presentation techniques is to practise.

Common Mistakes

Students often leave things until the last minute rather than face the fact that they have a presentation to do. This may alleviate the pain for a short amount of time, but the better prepared you are, the more in control you will feel. The sooner you start to prepare, the less anxious you will feel on the day.

Further Information

Need additional support?

In the first instance speak to your course tutor about any issues you have with specific assignments.

If you have more general worries about your writing or require additional support, then visit the library or Student Support Services.

Now you've read the guide, we suggest that you put some of the strategies into practise, and remember, the more you do, the easier it will become.

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