Tip Sheet Oral Presentations

If the thought of presenting to a live audience leaves you feeling anxious and stressed, you are certainly not alone. Many students fear doing so, but this does not need to be the case. The good news is that anybody can learn to present with some degree of confidence and do reasonably well at it. However, this will not happen without some hard work. As with anything worth doing well in life, practice makes perfect. The presentation iceberg below illustrates this principle. Essentially, your performance on presentation day will largely depend on the time and effort you have spent planning and practising for it.

This tip sheet will guide you through the steps of planning, structuring, writing and delivering a professional oral presentation.

What are the steps to executing a successful oral presentation?

1. Plan your presentation.
   - Determine the objectives, length and audience for your presentation.
   - Allocate roles of the group members if it is a group presentation.
2. Research your topic.
   - Read widely and critically to gather information to demonstrate that you understand the key concepts and viewpoints relevant to your topic.
3. Structure and write your presentation.
   - An introduction - to attract the audiences’ attention and set the agenda.
   - A body - of logically organised key points that present the main content.
   - A conclusion - to sum key points and leave audience with a call to action.
   - Time to address questions (if required).
4. Consider presentation aids to enhance your presentation e.g. PowerPoint slides, Prezi, visuals aids, props or handouts.

5. Practise your presentation.
   - Practise as many times as necessary to ensure that you are familiar with your content.
   - Ensure a logical order and flow of information.
   - Refine and change where necessary.
   - Time your presentation to ensure you do not exceed time limits.

6. Deliver your presentation. To convey professionalism:
   - be enthusiastic, confident and yourself,
   - face the audience,
   - make eye contact and avoid reading from a script,
   - be articulate and speak clearly and at a moderate pace, and
   - keep your body language open and friendly.

Activity

One of the most useful presentations you could make for your future career is that of the ‘elevator pitch’.

1. Watch the following video on how to deliver a successful elevator pitch: https://youtu.be/Noowl0ydDvA
2. Write your own elevator pitch.
3. Practise presenting your elevator pitch in front of others and/or record yourself on your phone.
4. Learn from feedback from others and from watching the recording of your pitch.

You will now be ready to present your elevator pitch to prospective employers when an opportunity presents itself.

Remember! As with everything else, it does take time to master delivering presentations. The more you do it, the better you will become at doing this.

Contact
If you have any questions about this material, please contact ECU’s Learning Advisers at learningadviser@ecu.edu.au