

## Authors

JM Laidlaw  
E A Hesketh

Instructional Design  
JM Laidlaw

Desktop Publishing  
LE Bell  
MC Gunn

Computing  
NK McManus

# P resentations



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# Snippets on Presentations



**The secret of giving an effective presentation is in its preparation. In other words, think in advance about what you are going to say, how you are going to say it, and what visual aids might help you get your message across. Remember colleagues will have given up valuable time to attend your presentation so don't waste their time or indeed your own!**

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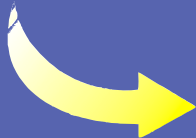
## The problem

I just hate making a presentation in front of colleagues.

I spent so much time working up the case but when it came to presenting it to the group, I just froze.

I've never been taught to give a lecture so I guess I'm a bit apprehensive about giving one.

You have to be a bit of a juggler to manage all the visuals. It's not my scene.



## The solution

I think all the preparation for my talk paid off. It gave me more confidence. I really felt I knew more about the topic than anyone else in the room!

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# J ntroducing Presentations

Whether you are asked to give a case presentation to ward staff, or speak at a Journal Club or give a paper at a Scientific meeting the experience to some of us can be a bit nerve racking. It is not surprising since most doctors have never had formal training in public speaking. They are just expected to perform. It can also be a draining experience especially if you want to perform with panache.



Note...

*Just think for a minute... If you were asked to give a one hour postgraduate lecture, and you have an audience waiting to hang on to your every word... for how long would they be attentive?*

**Shock, horror! They would only be interested in what you have to say for about 10 minutes.**

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**A one-hour lecture does not mean that you are expected to speak for that length of time. You should plan to leave at least 20 minutes for discussion at the end of your talk.**



**So go on, why not choose the title for this fictitious lecture and remember to make it snappy. A boring title will certainly not fill the lecture theatre, and that will get you off to a bad start.**





# presentations in action

## Planning

Now that you have chosen the title you can start to plan. The most important task is to give your presentation a structure.

The audience will need an overview of the topic

Then you can present the facts

Finally you can summarise



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## The overview

You will probably be nervous for the first few minutes yet it is these minutes which are crucial to your presentation. Don't spoil the presentation by repeating the title of your talk. You have probably been introduced by a chairperson and your talk has no doubt been publicised by poster or leaflet or word of mouth. Worse still do not apologise for your content or presentation. That definitely is a switch off. It is not wise to read from a script but it is a good idea to have your opening remarks on paper - it is your prop to get you started.



Note...

Think for a moment of 'openings' which have grabbed your attention.



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## Holding attention

Now to the main message. Remember that 10 minute attention span. You will need to make sure that you highlight your most important message within that period. Then it is a case of keeping the audience's attention throughout the remainder of your presentation. They will not be as enthusiastic about the subject as yourself, so if you are not exuding enthusiasm that's bad news. If you are not switched on by what you are speaking about you can't expect the audience to shower you with plaudits!

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Think

Think for a moment about the lectures that you have enjoyed in your medical career so far. Whether you are still in training or have risen in seniority you will have attended hundreds of hours of lectures. What was it about some of the presentations that was so appealing?

So for your fictitious lecture what little "extras" might you consider incorporating?

*continued...*



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Large group presentations are constantly slated for being too passive a learning experience, but they need not be so.

At the press of a button with a computerised interactive audience response system you can interact as much as you like and come away from the lecture with a printout of the responses you made and an indication of how many were correct.



Note...

An interactive system can work with as few as fifteen people and with as many as 150.

Discussion time is probably the most valuable for you and your audience... that is if you actually give them a chance to ask questions. Don't be like the speaker who took 19 minutes to respond to the one question. He or was it she ended up giving another mini lecture!

*continued...*



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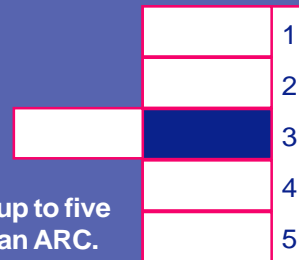


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Now if your Faculty cannot afford such a sophisticated piece of equipment, don't despair. You can still encourage interactivity using what has been termed Audience Response Cards (ARC). All you need to do is to pose some multiple choice questions with up to five answers. Each student must be provided with an ARC.



Note...

Note that each section of the card has been masked, but when opened reveals a different colour for each response.

Supposing No.3 is the correct answer and is coloured blue. The lecturer would hope for a sea of blue cards to be displayed but would easily spot the student who had responded incorrectly. You could of course save yourself even more work by simply giving the students five separate coloured cards - no cutting or pasting!

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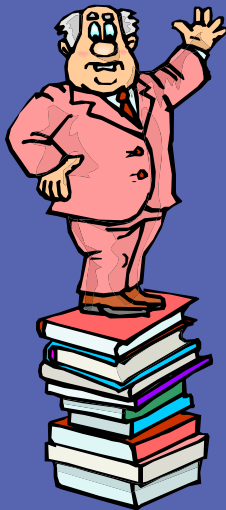
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and finally. . .



**You may not have successfully kept everyone awake during the lecture, but even if some of the audience have “drifted off” you can swiftly update them with the key points, so making sure that they can take part in the twenty minutes of discussion.**

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## Examples in practice – of lecturers

The lecturer spoke too quickly. No sooner did I start making notes than he switched to the next slide.

The slides were a bit complex but at least he pointed out the main features which was helpful.

He prowled back and forward like a lion in a cage - it was most annoying.

I was sitting in the front row and I had difficulty hearing the speaker. Those at the back had no chance!

She used so many slides it was like rapid gunfire!

I didn't know much about the subject but clearly the lecturer was an enthusiast - this rubbed off on me and has encouraged me to read more about it.

The discussion time was excellent - the best part of the presentation.

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# Useful checklist



## Do's

- Avoid putting too much information into your presentation – you will run out of time.
- Avoid using visual aids to the exclusion of yourself. They are only there as a tool to reinforce your message.
- Limit the colours which you use for visuals to three, otherwise you will be in danger of creating the rainbow effect.
- Avoid addressing the visual. Unless you are using a neck microphone your audience will not hear a word you are saying.
- Have a glass of water 'on tap'. With nerves you might not dry up but there is the danger of your mouth doing so.
- Try to vary the volume pitch and speed of your voice.

## Dont's

- Anyone that lectures for more than 40 minutes does so at their own peril!
- Don't refuse a microphone. You may think your audience will hear you but unless you have had voice training that will be unlikely.
- Some of us have lower pitched voices than others. Don't change your natural pitch but be aware that as you become more nervous the pitch gets higher.
- Don't talk too loudly. If you are presenting in a small room your audience will not be too happy!

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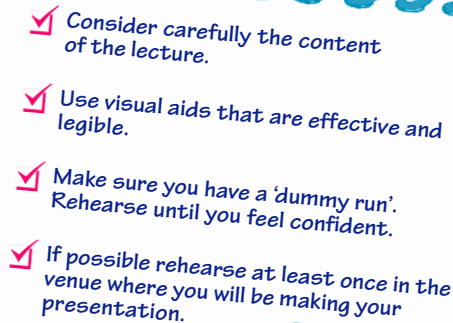




# ractical tips

Think

For your fictitious lecture what preparatory work would you carry out to ensure that your presentation was smooth running?

- 
- ✓ Consider carefully the content of the lecture.
  - ✓ Use visual aids that are effective and legible.
  - ✓ Make sure you have a 'dummy run'. Rehearse until you feel confident.
  - ✓ If possible rehearse at least once in the venue where you will be making your presentation.

*continued...*



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✓ Check that the equipment is working and that you have sufficient cable length to 'switch on' your computer.

✓ Some consuls built in to podiums are like a pilot's cockpit! Identify the projector switches, the light switches and the microphone switches. Flick the wrong switch and you might plunge your audience into darkness before you even begin.

✓ If you are intending to use visuals then for 35 mm slides, computer presentations or video you will need 'black out'. The overhead projector can be used in daylight conditions.

# Other learning opportunities

There are many books and other resources on presentations. Here is a short resumé of our suggestions.



Click the appropriate button if you wish to find out more

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**Arredondo L (1991). *How to present like a Pro - getting people to see things your way*. New York, McGraw-Hill Inc.**

*This is an excellent book which covers all you need to know about making a presentation. Principles for presenters, preparing your message, overcoming anxiety, fielding questions and comments are just some of the areas covered. The author earned a number of awards for outstanding performance and professional excellence so the tips in the book are worth taking on board.*

**Townsend J (1997). *The Business Presenter's Pocket Book*. Management Pocket Books Ltd. Alresford Press Ltd, Alresford, Hants.**

*An excellent 'coffee time read'. Learn how to field difficult questions, how to start your presentation and finish it with impact and what is meant by the lighthouse technique.*

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**Robertson LJ (2000). Twelve tips for using a computerised interactive audience response system. *Medical Teacher* 22(3): 237-239.**

*A practical guide based on the author's experiences of using a computerised interactive audience response system in a wide variety of settings.*

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**Video Arts. Can we please have that the other way round?**

*This video portrays John Cleese at his best when he tries to give a colleague some tips about using slides in a presentation. Unfortunately, he forgets some crucial points in preparation leaving him in a cold sweat. Once seen you will never make the mistakes which are portrayed - guaranteed.*

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The international database TimeLIT (Topics in Medical Education Literature) [www.timelit.org](http://www.timelit.org) gives free access to articles relating to education in medicine, dentistry, nursing, patient health and the professions allied to medicine.

Other useful websites for those interested in Medical Education are that of the Association for the Study of Medical Education [www.asme.org.uk](http://www.asme.org.uk) and that of the Association for Medical Education in Europe [www.amee.org](http://www.amee.org)

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# Group activity

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**See yourself as others see you.**

- **First - find a video camera. You may have one in the Practice. If you are based in a hospital you may be able to borrow one from the Postgraduate Office.**
- **Get one of two colleagues together - one to operate the camera, the other to sit at the back of the room just to check that you can be heard.**
- **Practice perfecting your style of delivery.**
- **Be sure to get feedback from your colleagues. It is much better to get constructive feedback at this stage.**



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Remember this quote from a health professional who was far from enthusiastic about the prospect of giving a presentation

*You have to be a bit of a juggler to manage all the visuals. It's not my scene.*

It is a fair comment, and one which has to be addressed. Many visual aids are used badly. You should never feel obliged to use them, and should only do so if you feel they will help you get your message over more effectively.



**Practice makes perfect.**

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