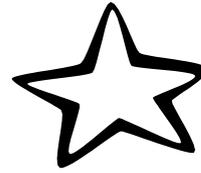
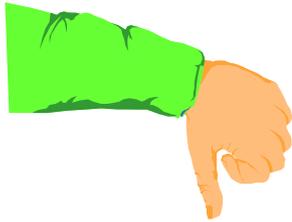


## PRESENTATIONS

This booklet is about the skills of **delivering** an effective individual or group presentation. It also offers you some advice about controlling anxiety.

### GOOD and BAD PRESENTATIONS:

Think about presentations you have seen or heard in the past. What were the elements of both good and poor presentations? Write in the spaces below.



| POOR PRESENTATION | GOOD PRESENTATION |
|-------------------|-------------------|
|                   |                   |

You will find our comments on page 3.

## WHY STUDENTS ARE ASKED TO GIVE PRESENTATIONS:

- It offers an opportunity for you to do some independent research on a topic.
- It gives you the chance to work together with other students in a small team.
- It will develop your verbal communication skills.
- It will help you prepare for careers where you will have to give presentations occasionally.

Students may have to give presentations individually, or as part of a group presentation.

## KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

Presentations can be assessed or unassessed. If they are an assessed part of the module, your tutor will usually give you a clear indication of what is expected of you and other students involved. However, there are a number of important questions you need to be clear about:

- The **aim of your presentation** and its contribution to the module: is there a specific purpose for the presentation? And, - will you be presenting new ideas to this audience, or building upon their prior knowledge?
- The **composition of the audience** - and what is expected of them, e.g. will they have a role in assessing the quality of presentation.
- The **time allotted for the talk**, and is any question time from the audience part of this?

Our comments on what makes for a good presentation (exercise on page 1) are on the next page.

## A GOOD PRESENTATION

### **A GOOD PRESENTATION:**

- is obviously well-prepared in advance, e.g. notes and slides are carefully prepared and ready.
- has a **clear structure** prepared in advance. There is a beginning, middle and clear ending.
- is **relevant** to the interests and needs of the audience.
- is **concise**: it gets to the main points quickly and succinctly.

### **IN A GROUP PRESENTATION, THE FIRST PRESENTER WILL:**

- get the presentation off to a good start by introducing him or herself, and other members of the group.
- set out the main aims of the presentation.
- tell the audience how the group would prefer to deal with questions, e.g. during the presentation, or at the end.

### **ALL PRESENTERS WILL:**

- look clean and smart.
- use language appropriate to the level of ability and understanding of the audience.
- will speak clearly and with enthusiasm.
- appear confident – and will never **apologise for their lack of experience in making presentations** (this is the 'kiss of death' for any presenter!)
- will look at the audience, **will establish strong eye contact with them** and will smile and look pleasant.
- stand well and straight – head upright and looking comfortable.
- avoid presenting unnecessary detail.
- will not distract the audience from the message – by fiddling with keys, pens, coins – or anything else!

- Other members of the group will not talk when another is presenting. This is very distracting as well as bad manners.

**A POOR PRESENTATION IS THE CONVERSE OF ALL THE POINTS JUST LISTED.**

## **THE INFORMATION YOU PRESENT**

You can present information in a variety of ways, but the most popular and effective tend to be by using:

- a flip-chart
- an overhead projector (OHP)
- or power-point presentation

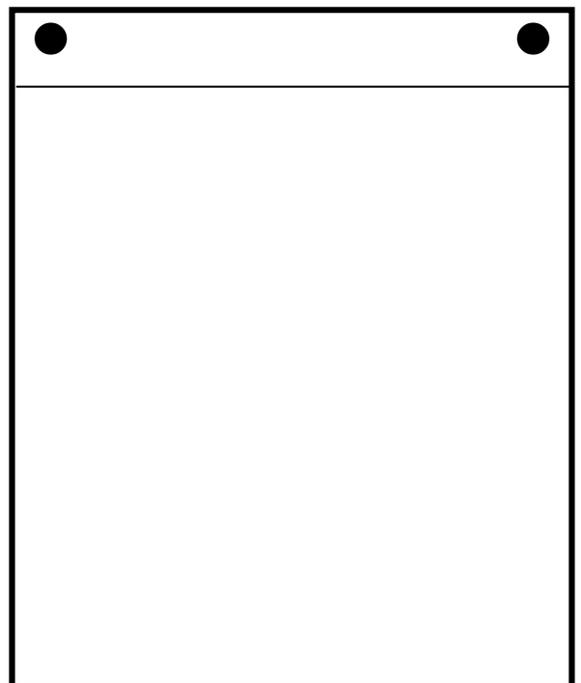
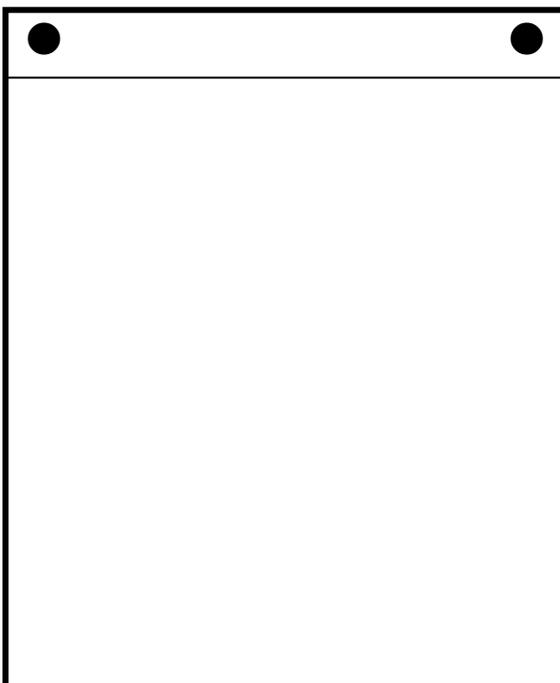
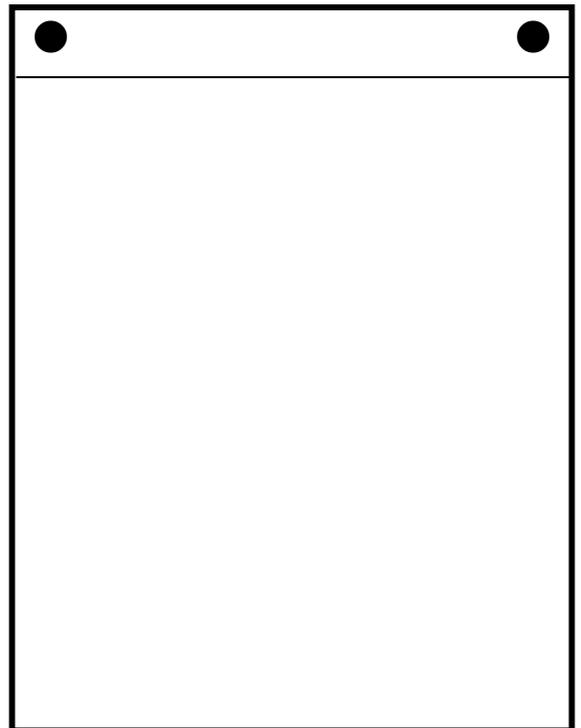
**Whichever medium for presentation you use:**

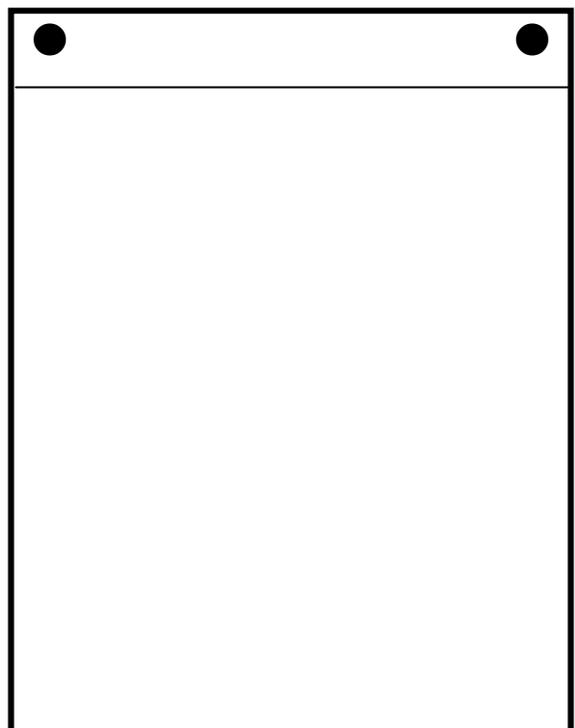
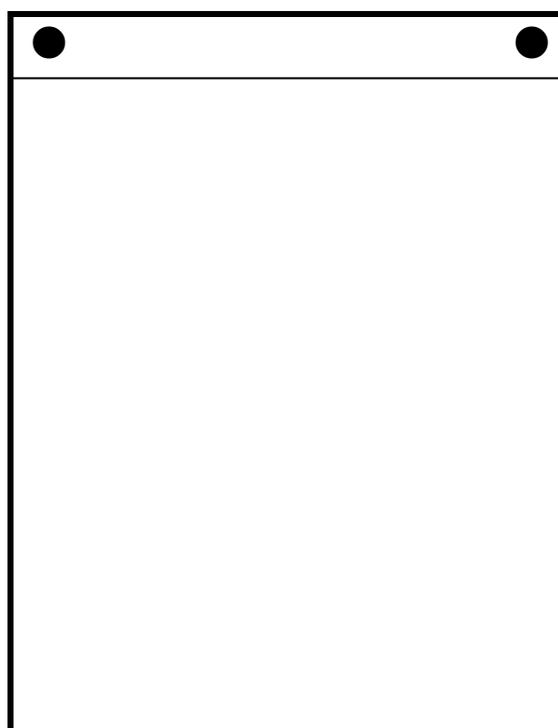
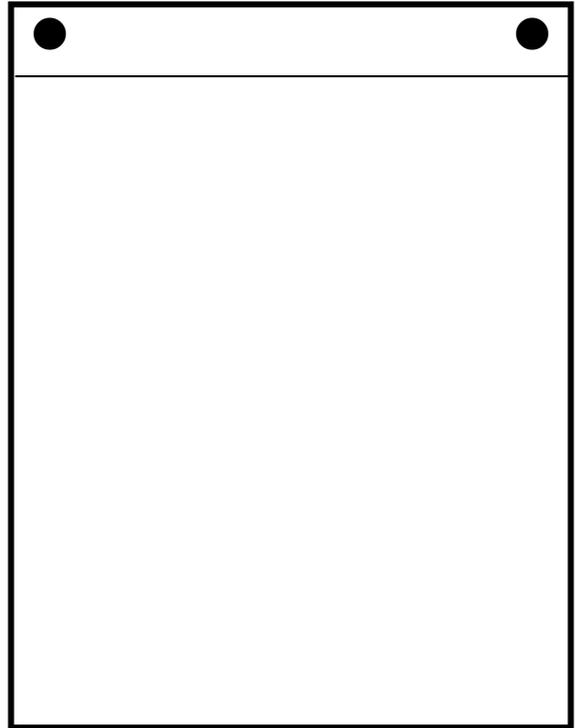
- Keep your words and images **clear and simple**.
- **Don't crowd each sheet or slide with detail** – just stick to three or four points per sheet (people tend to remember ideas that are presented in clusters of three).
- Make sure that all the people in all parts of the room **can read** what you have written.
- Use **bullet points**, rather than write large passages of text in sentences.
- Make sure you present your ideas in a **clear sequence**.
- **Don't be afraid to attempt a drawing** – you don't have to be a great artist, and you can make a joke of your efforts. Drawings, no matter how crude, can often convey an idea better than words.
- **Put complicated figures and diagrams on to a handout** for the audience – don't attempt to put these on to visual aids.

If you have been working as a group, you will have to decide who is going to do what and in what order.

Most groups, for the purposes of assessment, if applicable, will need to involve **all** group members, with someone introducing and concluding the session as a whole, and individual members each taking a section to present.

Below and on the following page there are eight blank miniature flip chart sheets to complete to prepare your presentation. You may not need them all. Don't crowd the blanks with points - **remember people tend to remember ideas that are presented in clusters of three.**







## **ANXIETY: WORRIED ABOUT MAKING A PRESENTATION?**

Anxiety about speaking in front of groups is very widespread and distressing for the individuals affected.

For some, the thought of giving a talk or making a speech is more frightening than heights, financial difficulties, snakes- and even death!

**The symptoms of anxiety before giving a presentation can include:**

| The night or nights before:  | Just before the presentation:   | During the presentation:   |
|--|---|--|
| <br>Sleeplessness | <br>Headache,<br>breathlessness,<br>sweaty hands | <br>Shaking hands,<br>tremulous voice,<br>avoiding eye contact<br>with audience,<br>stumbling over, or<br>gabbling words, or<br>total 'freeze-up'<br>(unable to speak) |

Why people get anxious about making presentations – see next page.

## WHY PEOPLE GET ANXIOUS ABOUT MAKING PRESENTATIONS?

- ☹️ They worry about their accents or their English.
- ☹️ They worry about being judged by others.
- ☹️ They worry about being the centre of attention in this situation.
- ☹️ They worry about 'not getting it right'.
- ☹️ They worry they are going to let other people down.
- ☹️ They worry about being worried. They think they should be 'super-cool'.

## SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CONTROL YOUR ANXIETY?

Some anxiety is good for you. It keeps you sharp, alert, not complacent or blasé and ready to give an effective presentation.

What you do need to do is to avoid **showing signs** of acute apprehension. If you are very nervous, this will communicate itself to the audience and they will become tense or embarrassed – and you will want to fall into a deep black hole!

The following lists some techniques people use for controlling anxiety:

The best way to avoid anxiety is to **prepare** your presentation thoroughly well in advance.

- **Practise, practise, practise - plus feedback.** Practise your presentation; run through your presentation with other people and listen to, and take note of, their feedback.
- **Have everything ready in time.** Don't rush into the lecture room at the last minute, and **check out the room** and equipment you are going to be using well in advance.
- It will put you at an advantage **if you are already in the room** when the audience arrives. The message this gives out is 'I am in control here'.



**Before the audience arrives go through some simple relaxation exercises, which really work**

- Find a quiet space- sit on a comfortable chair- close your eyes.
- Pull your shoulders right up to your chin – hold it – then let them drop and relax completely. Do this for a few minutes.
- Swivel your head slowly and gently round in an anti-clockwise motion.
- At the same time as you do these head and shoulder exercises, slow your breathing down. Take deep breaths, hold them for a moment then exhale slowly.
- The head and shoulder exercises will loosen the tension in your shoulders and larynx. Then sit quietly breathing slow and deep.
- Empty your mind of all immediate thoughts. Try and imagine instead a soft colour or the word 'PEACE' slowly filling your mind. Give yourself ten minutes just relaxing in this way.
- As you go to the lecture hall, frame your thoughts in a positive way. Imagine yourself standing **confidently** before the group. Your presentation **will go well**, you will **do well**. It will be a **good presentation**- and it will be.

Remember, 99.9% of the audience are on your side. They know how you feel and want you to do well.

For a more detailed account of this approach, see next section.

The Effective Learning Advisor at the School of Management can also help you prepare by offering you one-to-one advice to help you overcome anxiety and give a good presentation.

## CREATIVE VISUALISATION and EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS

Creative visualisation techniques can help you control anxiety and help you give an effective presentation.

### PUTTING ANXIETY INTO PERSPECTIVE

- Anxiety is about **fearing** what **might happen** in the future. This can lead us to avoid a situation that causes us anxiety.
- However, because we don't **know** what will happen in the future – we have a **choice** how we can feel about it.
- We can choose to feel anxious. Or we can choose to feel positive and optimistic about the future.
- If we have then a choice about how we feel – why not choose to feel good, optimistic and positive about the future?

### ANXIETY ABOUT PRESENTATIONS

In relation to presentations, we can begin to feel more positive about giving presentations if **we choose to**.

But we can also change the way we feel by **imagining that we are successful** in whatever performance we are involved in, including job interviews or sports, athletics etc.

*Olympic athlete, Marilyn King, had trained hard for three years for the Olympics. With just one year to go before the games she had a car accident and was in hospital for six weeks.*

*Lacking any opportunity for physical training, she practised her routines over and over again in her mind. Every day she 'exercised' using visualisation techniques.*

*When she left hospital, she had just two months to get fit for the Pentathlon.*

*Her coach was amazed however, at how fit she was. Her muscles and general fitness were at such a level that she was able to bring herself to peak performance within four weeks of leaving hospital.*

*Her mind had toned and trained her body.*

*(Rose 2000)*

## THREE STEPS TOWARD IMPROVING PRESENTATION PERFORMANCE

### STEP 1

- You need to be in a relaxed state. Go somewhere quiet away from hassle and interruptions.
- Breathe deeply and drain your mind of all thoughts of course work or other concerns.
- Consciously slow down your breathing. Breathe slow, easy and deep. Do this for at least five minutes.

### STEP 2

- Now start to imagine. Imagine visiting the room where you will give the presentation and imagine yourself in this room - feeling good about being in the room. **It feels good to be in the room. Imagine feeling good to be in the room.**
- You have everything ready. You have all the information ready. **There are no problems.**
- Now think about you standing there about to give your presentation. You are looking good. There are people in the room. Think about how it feels to be standing there in **control and confident** – how **does** it feel?
- You are standing there, your breathing is under control. You don't feel in a panic – **it feels good to be there.** Try and really get hold of the good feeling. Imagine how it feels. **You feel good.**
- Think about you feel to be saying what you want to say and saying it well – how **does** it feel? You are saying what you want to say well – really imagine this happening. Hear yourself saying it confidently, clearly.
- Think about afterwards and the feeling of satisfaction you will get from giving a good presentation – how **does** it feel? You feel a mixture of relief and pleasure – get hold of that feeling and enjoy it.

### STEP 3

To help you toward feeling good, you also need to be ready in a practical way, too. You need therefore to be:

- **PREPARED** – know what you are going to say, particularly the first sentence.
- **PREPARED**: look good; be smart. This will help you **feel good**.
- **PREPARED** – all your handouts or visual aids are ready and you have seen the place where you will give the presentation.

***Dr Charles Garfield worked with astronauts at N.A.S.A.***

*He watched them rehearse every single operation again and again in simulators.*

*Later, he made a full-time study of 'peak performers': people who were world-class experts in what they did.*

*They too used simulation – but their form of simulation was **mental rehearsal**. They all used imagery to help them succeed.*

(Rose 2000)

***The German organic chemist, Friedrich Kekule, was trying to imagine how the chemical structure of benzene might appear.***

*As he relaxed by his fire, he closed his eyes and visualised a snake chasing its tail.*

*He suddenly realised that the atomic structure of benzene might take the form of a closed ring.*

*His idea had a profound impact on study of organic chemistry.*

(Rose 2000)

Source for examples given: Rose, C. (2000) *Master it Faster: how to learn faster, make good decisions and think creatively*. London: Industrial Society.

## FURTHER READING

These are all the titles in booklets in the 'Effective Learning' series:

1. *Return to Part-time Study*
2. *Return to Full-time Study*
3. *The First Semester*
4. *Time Management*
5. *Accelerated Learning*
6. *20 Tips for Effective Learning*
7. *Six Steps to Effective Reading*
8. *Effective Note Making*
9. *Effective Writing*
10. *Essay Writing (1) stages of essay writing*
11. *Essay Writing (2) planning and structuring your essays*
12. *Essay Writing (3) finding your own voice in essays*
13. *Essay writing (4) ten ways to liven your essays*
14. *References and Bibliographies*
15. *Report Writing*
16. *Pass Your Exams*
17. *Your Assignment Results – and how to improve them*
18. *Presentations*
19. *Group Work*
20. *Introduction to Research and Research Methods*
21. *Foundations of Good Research*
22. *Writing Your Management Project Report or Dissertation*

You can download any of these from the School of Management Homepages: **Resources– Effective Learning** link, or contact the Effective Learning Service, tel. 4320 (internal), Email: M.T.Sedgley@Bradford.ac.uk.

In the School of Management and J.B. Priestley libraries, there is a study skills section at **D371.30281**

### **Recommended reading:**

Cottrell, S. (2003) ***The Study Skills Handbook***, London: Palgrave (*contains lots of bite-sized chunks of advice and information presented in a lively and visually interesting way. This is an excellent general study skills guide for all undergraduate or postgraduate students*).

Giles, K. and Hedge, N. (1998) ***The Manager's Good Study Guide***. Maidenhead: Open University Press (*a study skills guide written for business studies students and contains advice and information presented in a clear, readable and subject-specific way*).

McIlroy, D. (2003) ***Studying at University: how to be a successful student***, London: Sage Publications (*there is a helpful chapter on giving a skilful presentation*).

Other learning material may be available, e.g. there is a video on effective presentations in the library; enquire at library reception.

The University Careers Service also has a range of free useful leaflets on giving effective presentations. These have job interviews in mind, but the skills are transferable to other situations.

**If you have any queries please contact Martin Sedgley, Effective Learning Advisor, University of Bradford School of Management.  
Telephone: 01274 234320  
Email: [M.T.Sedgley@Bradford.ac.uk](mailto:M.T.Sedgley@Bradford.ac.uk).**

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