Seminars

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Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (UELT)

Today’s Agenda

• Seminar – leading/ participating
• (Seminar) presentations
• Building confidence

Types of seminars

Tutor led:
tutor facilitates students to discuss ideas raised in lectures

Student led:
a student presents a paper, facilitates discussion and draws conclusions

Activity

• What is involved in giving a seminar?
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of giving a seminar?

Seminar – 4 elements

• Paper
• Presentation
• Discussion
• Drawing a conclusion

Advantages of giving a seminar:

• Can be based on an essay or dissertation
• Can generate suggestions and leads which help your research
• Can boost your grades
• Builds experience and confidence
Disadvantages of giving a seminar

• If not prepared it can be nerve-wracking for you and boring for participants
• Reading out papers puts audience off
• Badly managed discussions can be quite confrontational or embarrassing

Activity: A good presentation

• What makes a good presentation? Why?
• Make a list of dos and don'ts.

Presentation – 4 stages

• Plan
• Prepare
• Practice
• Present

Preparation

• What do you need to do before a presentation?

Before the Presentation

• Consider your aims
• Consider your audience
• Consider your venue
• Prepare your material
• Prepare the content
• Prepare yourself

Your aims

• The purpose of the presentation
• Your central message and supporting key factors
  - What do you want to ‘teach’ the audience?
  - What should your audience ‘take home’?
Your audience
• Who is coming?
• How well informed are they on the topic?
• What might stop them listening?

The Venue
• Will the layout suit everyone?
  – Seating
  – Visibility of screen
  – Visibility of yourself
  – Lighting: window glare
  – Physical access
• Preparation & checking time needed?

Your materials
• Concise, clear
• Well structured
• Manageable (what can be effectively covered in the time available)
• Interesting
• Relevant

Your Content
• Prepare in summary or note form
• What to include?
• What to leave out?
• Timing
• Structure:
  – Introduction
  – Development in clear sections
  – Sign-post statements
  – Conclusion

Yourself
• Your voice
• Your body-language, mannerisms
• Your appearance
• Your attitude
• Think positively

Nervousness
• What are you afraid of?
• Make a list of what is causing your anxiety?
Common causes of nervousness
- Fear of failure
- Forgetting details/getting stuck
- Not getting the message across
- Interruptions
- Boring the audience
- Timing
- Hostile/difficult questions
- Being laughed at

Overcoming nervousness/fear
- Fear is good - it is linked to new challenges and therefore to development
- Everyone feels fear - some people just deal with it more effectively
- Only when you do what you’re afraid of will you overcome fear
- The sooner we overcome fear the better
- It’s easier to push through the fear than to live with it and allow fear to win

Positive Thinking
- Make positive/supportive friends
- Deal with your fears
- Ask for help
- Be positive about mistakes – reflect - get feedback - learn - improve
- Welcome challenges
- Be prepared (prepare sessions, questions)

How to survive a presentation
- Know your stuff
- Prepare questions
- Be prepared for questions
- Make it audience friendly
  - Visual aids
  - Hand-outs
  - Interesting
- REHEARSE

Handling questions
- Be prepared
- Listen carefully
- Repeat question so that everyone can hear
- Answer concisely
- Take questions from all over the room
- Remain firm and cool in the face of hostility
- Don’t ramble or invent answers!

Take care with visual aids!
- Slides: a few key points per slide
- Professional vs complicated
- Be careful with colour
  - Keep it simple: avoid distractions
Discussion

• Decide on discussion questions in advance
• Divide students into groups (give questions and time limit)
• Circulate among the groups facilitating the discussion
• Chair the plenary session asking one person from each group to feed back ideas which can be documented

Drawing the Conclusion

• Draw together the ideas raised in the paper, the presentation and the discussion into an overall summative conclusion.
• Prepare summary points in your paper in advance
• Listen & take notes during the discussion and build these in to the final conclusion

To sum up:

• Prepare well in advance
• Structure your material
• Rehearse (timing !)
• Relax
• Maintain a clear delivery
• THINK POSITIVELY
• Ask for feed-back

Your turn!

You have got 10 minutes to prepare a micro-presentation on the topic of your choice!
  e.g. voter apathy, animal cruelty, children’s rights etc.

Think about the steps involved:
• How you would prepare?
• What you would include?
• How you would present your topic?
• What could be discussed?

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