
Appendix A: Advice from the Source: A Sample of Conference Presentation Guidelines

Table A.1 provides a number of general guidelines for presentations as presented in an email circular sent to all presenters for the 2017 European Association of Language Teachers of Healthcare (EALTHY) Conference, held in Bern, Switzerland, October 2017. I have reprinted the circular because I believe it succinctly encapsulates the main points that most academic conferences expect from their presenters and thus serves as a suitable epilogue for the contents of this book:

While many of the points mentioned in Table A.1 may be found in other conference guidelines, the above serves as the most comprehensive checklist for novice presenters that I have come across. If a prospective speaker can confidently say ‘yes’ to all the points made above, he or she is already halfway to the goal of performing an effective academic conference presentation.

Table A.1 The 2017 EALTHY Conference’s suggested presentation guidelines (reproduced courtesy of EALTHY, www.ealthy.com)

In order for the audience to benefit fully from your session, we would ask you to consider the following when preparing your presentation:

- We would encourage you to use a font size of at least 20 points to ensure your slides are legible.
 - We would discourage you from including overcomplex and heavily detailed slides (graphs, statistics, etc.), which may be difficult for the delegates to read.
 - We would discourage you from being overreliant on your slides.
 - We should advise you that conference delegates tend to be more receptive to speakers who do not read from pre-prepared notes.
 - Your talk should match the abstract you submitted.
 - Your chosen topic is in the area [as proscribed by the original call for papers and/or conference theme].
 - You have catered for the level of knowledge of your audience.
 - Your session is of practical use for the delegates.
 - Your session, if theoretical, considers the practical issues and implications that it raises.
 - Your audience can apply your experience to their own contexts.
 - Your session, if based on research, reports on a completed study or a significant phase.
 - Your session, if on behalf of a publisher, is not purely an advertisement for your product.
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Appendix B: Suggestions for Classroom Practice Activities

The second appendix offers samples of classroom exercises and handouts that can be copied and used by teachers or students to develop effective presentation practice classes or practice sessions. The first (Fig. A.1) is for self-evaluation, the second (Fig. A.2) is for peer evaluation, and the third (Fig. A.3) is for the practice of managing discussion session scenarios. All these figures/materials were created and piloted by the author.

The Q&A management strategies described earlier in this book include *admission, appeasement, avoidance/evasion, clarification, conformation, elaboration, reformulation, renegotiation, and returning the question*. In the following practice activity, colleagues or classmates of the presenter can deliberately present ‘difficult’ questions in order to help the speaker to adopt an appropriate response strategy. ‘Discussants’ can choose (by choice or at random) any of the question/comment types contained in Fig. A.3 in order to put the speaker ‘on the spot’:

Closing Notes

The goal in producing this book is to provide a practical aid for young, novice, and NNES academics when participating in international academic conferences. Since conferences are, by nature, dynamic and unpredictable, the suggestions and examples contained in this book can only go part of the way to producing top-notch presentations, having a more rewarding participation experience, and most importantly, to actually make academic conferences enjoyable and fruitful. I understand that not all the sections contained in this book will be relevant to every reader but I am confident that you will have found something that might improve your conference enjoyment, understanding, or performance.

Further Suggested Reading

For readers who wish to delve a little further into the topics discussed in this book, I would make the following suggestions, all of which are fully referenced at some point in the text.

The most comprehensive practical guide to giving academic conference presentations on the market is Adrian Wallwork’s ‘English for Presentations at International Conferences.’ The finest academic compendium of CP English is ‘The

Presentation self-evaluation check sheet**1. Pre-Presentation**

- My speaking space is clear and well-defined
- I am aware as to how much I can walk or move my body for this presentation
- I am aware of the audience number, who they are, and where they will be seated
- I have placed any tools (lasers, notes, water, mic etc.) in a convenient location
- I am in a comfortable position in relation to both the computer and the screen
- I know where I will be placing my hands and I am comfortable in using my hands
- My voice is ready to speak
- I have adopted a comfortable but confident speaking posture
- My slides (including videos, online content, animations) are prepared for display
- I am familiar with the order of all slides in the presentation
- I am familiar with the placing of all animations in the presentation
- I am familiar with all the written text appearing on the slides
- I am confident in using any specialist terms, unusual phrases, or acronyms

2. Opening section

- I have a clear and specific opening line prepared
- I am not repeating information about myself or the presentation that is already well-known to the audience
- I will include an outline only if it is informative and helpful for the audience
- I will enter into the body of the presentation quickly, sustaining audience interest

3. Presentation Body

- I have considered how to manage transitions from section to section and slide to slide
- I will paraphrase, and not merely read, most of the text appearing on the slides
- I will not use section headings as my sole transition marker
- I have considered where to alter my pace, where to pause, and where to add emphatic intonation in order to best convey my intentions to the audience
- There are no more than three key points presented on any one slide
- All my text is easily readable to the audience
- All charts, graphs, statistical data is easily readable to the audience

4. Closings

- I know how to finish any sentence, section, or utterance in a concise, clear manner
- I will highlight the most important points made in the presentation
- My ending carries impact
- I have conveyed something new and meaningful to my audience

Fig. A.1 Conference presentation self-evaluation check sheet

Peer Presentation Evaluation Form

Presenter's name:

Topic and/or title:

Rank the speaker's performance from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent) on the matrix below:

The speaker held my interest throughout the presentation
1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
Comments:

The topic choice was novel and interesting
1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
Comments:

The flow of the presentation was easy to grasp
1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
Comments:

The speaker's voice was clear, understandable and added to the effectiveness of the presentation
1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
Comments:

The speaker's slides were easy to read and/or comprehend
1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
Comments:

The speaker's physical manner enhanced the presentation
1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
Comments:

The speaker used a suitable register
1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
Comments:

The speaker provided the audience with memorable or useful content
1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
Comments:

Fig. A.2 Peer presentation evaluation form

The speaker highlighted key points clearly
 1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
 Comments:

The presentation had persuasive, informative, and entertainment value
 1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
 Comments:

The speaker kept a reasonable pace and finished within the allotted time
 1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
 Comments:

The speaker's use of graphics, design, and any multimedia was effective
 1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
 Comments:

General comments:

Fig. A.2 (continued)

Discussion Session Practice Activities

1. The discussant makes a comment that lasts several minutes, ending with a question that is unclear.
2. The discussant asks, "Professor, when did you establish your vfggrkt?"
3. The discussant asks about topic X, although the speaker discussed topic Y.
4. The discussant uses a vague term: e.g., "What is the exact value of your study?"
5. The discussant makes a helpful point.
6. The discussant asks, "Professor, how would you compare your results to the Logan report findings?" (the speaker has no idea about these 'Logan report findings')
7. The discussant asks, "Can you give me the references of the studies you used?"
8. The discussant says, "I have some very different views about (the topic)."
9. The discussant speaks far too quickly.
10. The discussant corrects an (alleged) error in the presentation.

Fig. A.3 Discussion practice activities/scenarios

Language of Conferencing’ (edited by Ventola, Shalom, and Thompson). Elizabeth Rowley-Jolivet has also published numerous interesting and informative research articles regarding CP discourse. Those who wish to explore the very fertile field of ELF and English varieties further should seek out Barbara Seidlhofer’s VOICE, Anna Mauranen’s ELFA, John Swales’ MICASE, or Andy Kirkpatrick’s various ICE corpus projects. For academic discourse in general, and academic writing in particular, Ken Hyland’s work is the logical place to start. Likewise, for those with an interest in genre analysis, John Swales is the obvious starting point although V. K. Bhatia’s work in the same field is also highly recommended.

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