

Speaking

Name: Blended presentations

Aim(s): to run a short, blended course on giving effective presentations

Contexts: Business English / EAP

Level: Pre-intermediate and above

Type of tool: ebook / typical presentation tools such as PowerPoint or Prezi. A suitable LMS (optional) to post feedback

Type of materials: PUB

Planning: long e.g. 8-week course

Preparation:

Students' course material is the ebook. In this example, the ebook 'English for presentations' (OUP) is used, which has 6 units. Each unit contains starter activities, listening, guided practice exercises and suggestions for discussion topics.

Procedure:

1. In the classroom:

Set up the course with a typical 'Getting to know each other' task – students in small groups create a short presentation about themselves which shows their names / nicknames, job titles and reasons they have to give professional presentations. A spokesperson from each group summarises the information for the whole class. Take language notes on student errors.

Students brainstorm 'What makes an effective presentation' in small groups. They present their list to the class using an appropriate presentation tool. For example, Group 1 use the whiteboard, Group 2 use PPT and Group 3 Prezi. Take language notes on student errors.

Present your own ideas about what makes a good presentation, including tips which they may not have covered such as: prompt cards. Tell students you will email the feedback on any key mistakes, or post it on a site you are using as part of the course.

Issue the ebook and ask students to skim the content. Present key features of the ebook (for a list of these, see below). Go through the course programme (see below) and discuss the course requirements: the course content is available on the ebook and they will be expected to complete key tasks each week. The key tasks are compulsory. The students are free to complete the rest of the unit – this is optional; they should complete as much as they feel necessary. Encourage students who feel less confident to do as much work as possible at home from the unit.

2. Outside the class:

Key task 1: study how to start a good presentation and prepare the opening of a presentation. Students will deliver this next week in their face-to-face class.

3. In the classroom:

Divide the students into small groups and ask them to deliver the start of their presentation. Take feedback in the usual way and tell students they will receive a group email with general and specific feedback.

Continue the blended course in the same way: giving key tasks for homework and following these up the face-to-face lesson. For an example programme outline, see below.

Variations:

This course can be done as a short, intensive programme, or in a bookend manner with a face-to-face course at the start (needs analysis), middle (dry-run) and end (final presentation) with the rest of course delivered from the e-book.

Notes:

In this course, the classroom is for live presentations in small groups, and putting the language into practice with other students; in the out of class activities, students study input from the ebook at home and learn exponents such as: “I’ve divided my presentation into three parts”.

Ebook features: some features your ebook may have are listed below. Students can:

- play listening at slightly a slower speed
- check answers to exercises themselves
- email exercises directly to the teacher from the book
- add sticky-notes and / or audio notes to their book.

Eight week presentation skills course:

Week	In-class	At home
1	Intros 'What makes a good presentation?' Set homework task.	Unit 1: Getting the audiences' attention Key task: Plan your opening
2	In small groups, students deliver their openings. Students can use laptops or tablets to present. Set homework task.	Unit 2: Key tasks: do practice exercise - phrases for signposting. Students complete the form outlining a presentation.
3	Mini-presentation: dry-run of final presentation using signposting phrases. Set homework task.	Unit 3: Using visuals. Key task: Plan your visuals.
4	Mini-presentation: using visuals. Individual student tutorials. Set homework task.	Unit 4: Talking about trends. Key task: Describe trends.
5	Mini-presentation: presenting trends. Set homework task.	Unit 5: Key task: Using your voice effectively. Summing up.
6	Practising rhetorical techniques. Small group practice: finishing off Set homework task.	Unit 6: Key task: Dealing with questions.
7	Practice in dealing with questions. Set homework task.	Key task: prepare final presentation.
8	Deliver final presentation. Film (or record) final presentations. Tell students how they will receive feedback – e.g. by email.	Students receive feedback on final presentation including tips on how to continue.