

# Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <i>Preface</i>   | vii       |
| <b>1 Personal Development: Speaking to an Audience</b> | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>2 Delivery, Nonverbal Communication and Nerves</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| Using your voice                                       | 6         |
| Using silence  | 19        |
| Listening to voices                                    | 22        |
| Using NVC  | 22        |
| Nerves   | 31        |
| <b>3 Choosing and Using Visual Aids</b>                | <b>35</b> |
| Advantages of visual aids                              | 35        |
| Using visual aids                                      | 36        |
| Visual aid software                                    | 46        |
| Visual aid equipment                                   | 53        |
| Handouts   | 61        |
| Prototypes and demonstrations                          | 62        |
| Poster presentations                                   | 64        |
| Computer demonstrations                                | 67        |
| <b>4 Speaking as Part of Your Course</b>               | <b>70</b> |
| Seminar papers   | 71        |
| Tutorials  | 76        |
| Presentations  | 78        |
| Vivas  | 91        |
| <b>5 Speaking as Part of a Group</b>                   | <b>94</b> |
| Forming a group  | 94        |
| The venue  | 103       |
| Organising the group                                   | 104       |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Structuring the presentation                  | 105        |
| Rehearsals                                    | 107        |
| Answering questions                           | 108        |
| <b>6 Speaking as a Student Representative</b> | <b>112</b> |
| Choosing to stand                             | 112        |
| Open meetings                                 | 115        |
| Committee meetings                            | 116        |
| High-level committees                         | 120        |
| Open days                                     | 122        |
| Talking to new students                       | 124        |
| <b>7 Speaking at Elections and Meetings</b>   | <b>127</b> |
| Election to office                            | 127        |
| Speaking to the press                         | 129        |
| Speaking at meetings                          | 131        |
| Chairing meetings                             | 133        |
| Public meetings                               | 141        |
| <b>8 Job Searches and Job Interviews</b>      | <b>143</b> |
| Using the telephone for a job search          | 143        |
| Careers fairs                                 | 146        |
| Telephone interviews                          | 147        |
| Social media checking                         | 149        |
| First interview                               | 150        |
| Second interview                              | 154        |
| <i>Afterword</i>                              | 161        |
| <i>Further Reading</i>                        | 162        |
| <i>Index</i>                                  | 163        |

# 1 Personal Development: Speaking to an Audience

This chapter introduces you to:

- ▶ developing transferable skills and self-confidence
- ▶ choosing the right words
- ▶ assessing your ability to communicate in a range of situations
- ▶ the importance of listening

Developing your ability to speak to an audience is one of the greatest benefits you'll ever derive from your time in further or higher education. We've said 'developing', because it's likely that you've already had some experience of giving a talk, perhaps at school, for a club you belong to or in your place of work if you're a mature student. You will now have the chance to practise speaking effectively in a range of situations and in front of audiences of differing backgrounds and levels of knowledge. If you make the most of these opportunities, you will be gaining expertise which will be vital for your future and which may change you in ways you didn't expect when you began.

Let's look first at the practical outcome of your speaking abilities. A great deal is spoken and written nowadays about 'transferable skills' you can carry into your future, whether you're going to stay in academic life, teach or follow any of the multitude of job opportunities that will present themselves. In years to come, you may well change not only jobs but also your career itself: it's possible to see an opportunity you never dreamed of, and so to follow a new and exciting career path you didn't know about when you first left education. Transferable skills are those you can take with you: they're valuable for the rest of your life. The ability to speak well enough to interest, influence or persuade other people is a major asset, whatever you choose to do in the future.

You may also find that you gain in a more personal way. Many people are worried about talking to an audience and this is understandable – you may feel both nervous and vulnerable when you look for the first time at a roomful of people waiting to listen to you. This is a natural reaction and, as we'll discuss later, is in itself absolutely nothing to worry about. Most truly excellent speakers are nervous at the prospect of speaking. But – and this is the great advantage of having a go – once you've made a successful presentation, you will gain enormously in confidence. This means that you are likely

**2 Personal Development: Speaking to an Audience**

to make an even better presentation next time. Your new-found confidence may well affect other areas of your work, too: lecturers sometimes comment that after students have made their first presentation, they are more ready to ask questions, respond to a challenge, and organise themselves and their work more effectively.

You will be preparing a personal development plan, probably in discussion with your tutor. This will give you the opportunity to think about yourself, how you learn, what motivates you and so on. Part of this process is to help you to assess how your subject knowledge and career management skills are developing. Among the latter, you will be thinking about your transferable skills and how confident you are about using them. This book will help you with the specific skill of talking to an audience, not just as part of your coursework but also in your leisure time, whether you decide to become a student representative or just want to make a contribution at a society meeting. So, what is involved in public speaking, and what influences us if we're in the audience?

When we talk to other people, whether formally or in conversation, we use at least three different techniques: we vary our voices, use changes of tone, and reveal body language, a silent but eloquent way of sending a message. People's voices have qualities that may be attractive or unattractive: a low voice is usually easier to listen to than a high-pitched voice; a harsh voice can sound aggressive even when its owner feels at ease; a very soft voice may be pleasant at first, but becomes irritating if we, the listeners, have to concentrate hard to catch the words. Such qualities are not easy to change, but we're generally aware that we will speak more loudly if we're annoyed, more softly in an intimate setting, more rapidly if we're agitated, and probably more slowly if we're not sure how to put across an idea.

Tone of voice is also powerful in showing your meaning. Think of the many ways in which you can say something as simple as 'Thank you'. You can sound truly grateful, fully appreciative of the trouble someone has taken on your behalf, casual almost to the point of rudeness, or impatient and sarcastic if you're not really feeling grateful at all. We use differences of tone to reflect an emotional response beyond the straightforward meaning of our words.

It's much harder to control our body language. This is conditioned largely by the cultural framework in which we grew up, but also by the situation in which we find ourselves at the time and the emotions we're feeling as we speak. It can reveal a state of mind we'd prefer to keep quiet about, and in this way body language is both dangerous and important: it can give away responses we'd rather keep hidden, and it can either reinforce or contradict the words we use. Needless to say, we shall be looking at nonverbal

communication (body language) in detail when we discuss making a presentation and attending an interview.

We've mentioned words, which are, of course, the principal medium for communicating our ideas to other people. Choosing the 'right' words is also a complex procedure, as it depends on the meaning we want to convey, the person receiving the message, and the situation in which the communication takes place. Out of the enormous range of words available in the English language, we have to choose those which most accurately reflect our meaning, and this is by no means an easy decision. Think of the words that can be used to convey the idea of a pleasant feeling of general goodwill: cheerfulness, jollity, merriment, pleasure, joy, happiness. We can see at once that these words have similar meanings but they aren't interchangeable: merriment might last only for a moment or two at the end of a joke, while joy suggests a much deeper and more lasting emotion. If we want to influence an audience, we have to choose our words carefully so that they reflect our meaning as closely as possible.

Our choice of words is also conditioned both by the person who is going to hear them and the situation in which we find ourselves. If we're talking to a friend, we can usually be informal or even careless about our words, knowing that the recipient will understand our meaning even if we don't express ourselves very clearly; if we are speaking to a prospective employer, we will be much more formal and careful about the words we choose. If our friend is part of a large audience to which we're giving a formal presentation, the situation will override the individual and our approach will be formal in spite of the presence of the friend.

If speaking is clearly an art we need to think about carefully, so too is listening. We depend on the goodwill of the people who hear our words: do they really want to listen? Do they know how to interpret our tone of voice and our body language? Are they preoccupied with their own thoughts? Is their knowledge of the language we're speaking good enough for our purposes? We'll be looking at some aspects of the listening process in more detail later and also suggesting ways in which we can help our listeners to concentrate on our message.

In your course, you'll be expected to listen well and speak effectively. This will be in one-to-one situations, for example at meetings with your tutor, in small groups such as seminars, and as you make formal presentations, perhaps as part of a team. Many of these occasions will be assessed, some as part of your final exam result. In your leisure time, you will want to make the most of opportunities to join clubs and societies, and take a leading role when the time is right. You may want to stand for election to office and, if you're elected, may then have to introduce outside speakers and

**4 Personal Development: Speaking to an Audience**

chair meetings. You may represent your student group on an important and influential body such as your hall of residence management committee or university senate.

All these responsibilities depend to a large extent on your ability to speak clearly, concisely and convincingly. If you can do this, not only will you be making the most of your academic and social life, but you will also have developed both personal confidence and a useful, transferable skill to take into your future career.

**Top Tips**

- Think positively
- Develop your transferable skills and your own confidence
- Read the rest of this book!

# Index

## A

Asking questions 72–3, 75  
 Audibility 6–18  
 Audience, *see* Presentations, audience

## B

Backup for visual aids, *see* Visual aids, backup  
 Body language, *see* Non-verbal Communication  
 Breath control 10, 33

## C

Camtesia 52  
 Cards, *see* Notes for presentations  
 Careers fairs 146–7  
 Careers office 150, 152–6, 159–60  
 Chairing meetings 133–41  
 Committee meetings 135–41  
 Computer demonstrations 67–9  
 Concluding a presentation 107

## D

Data projectors 54–7  
 Delivery in presentations, *see* Presentations, delivery  
 Demonstrations 62–4

## E

Election to office 127–9  
 Emphasis in speaking 16–19, 22, 34, 45  
 Enthusiasm 24, 115, 148, 156  
 Equipment for presentations, *see* Data projectors  
 Eye contact, *see* Non-verbal Communication

## F

Facebook 52, 113–4, 149–50  
 File cards 83–7, 89–90  
 Flipcharts 132, 157  
 Font size in visual aids 39–40, 60, 65, 67

## G

Group presentations advantages of 95–6  
 allocation of responsibilities 94–5  
 answering questions 108–10  
 choice of subject 99–100  
 coordinating within 102–5  
 formation of 94–5  
 humour, use of 107  
 image in presentations 102  
 information gathering 100–1  
 limiting the subject 99–100  
 rehearsals 103–4, 107–8  
 structuring the presentation 105–6  
 venue 103  
 Guest speakers, introducing 133–5

## H

Handouts 61–2, 81, 90  
 High-level committees 120–2  
 Humour in presentations 44–5, 107

## I

Image in presentations 102, 114, 130  
 Information gathering 100–1  
 Internet 47–8, 52, 134, 156, 160  
 Interviews  
 careers fairs 146–7  
 dress 151–2  
 first and second 155–60  
 preparation 150–1  
 presentations 155–7

Interviews (*continued*)

- questions 152–3
- telephone 147–9, 150

Introductions, *see* Presentations,  
introductions

**J**

Job interviews, *see* Interviews

Job searches 143–6

**L**

Language accuracy 3

- barriers 125
- written and spoken 83

LCD projectors, *see* Data projectors

## Listening

- barriers to 3
- positive 12, 22, 117–8
- preparation for 72

**M**

## Meetings

- chairing 133–40
- committee 135–41
- open 115–6
- public 141–2
- speaking at 131–3

Milk round, *see* Careers fairs

**N**

Names, people's 87, 105

## Nerves

- advantages of 32
- control of 32–4
- deep breathing 33–4
- overconfidence 32

## Non-verbal communication

- audience response 24–5
- cultural influence 22–3
- during questions 30–1
- at the end (of the talk) 31
- eye contact 26–7
- facial expression 27–8
- feet 29, 54
- first impressions 24
- hands 29
- in the middle (of the talk) 29–30

- movement 30
- posture 24–5
- sitting and standing 28–9
- at the start (of the talk) 24–5
- in team presentations 106
- in telephoning 145
- walking 25–6

## Notes for presentations

- content 84–6
- dangerous (notes) 82–3
- file cards 83–7, 89–90
- good (notes) 83–8
- visual aids (as notes) 87–8

Numbers 20–1, 40, 45

**O**

Open days 122–4

Open meetings 115–6

Overconfidence 32

Overhead projectors 52–3, 147–8

**P**

Pace of speech 11–13, 124, 130

Personal development plan 2, 143

Personal Response System

Pitch of voice 2, 7, 9–10

Plagiarism 91, 93

Podcasting 47

Poster presentations 64–7

PowerPoint presentations, *see* Visual aid  
equipment

PowToon 46, 50–1

## Presentations, formal

- audience 9, 10–12, 55, 79–80
- choice of topic 74, 99–100
- conclusion to 107
- delivery 14–17
- dress 102
- formality 102
- handovers 105
- in interviews 78, 80, 88, 155–7
- introductions 24–5, 105–6
- language 83
- limitation of material 99–100
- number of speakers 98
- questions 20, 30–1, 34, 74–5, 79, 125,  
129

rehearsals 53–4, 80, 95, 103–4, 107–8  
 silence 19–20  
 structure 105–6  
 timing 78, 88–90, 119  
*see also* Group presentations,  
 Non-verbal communication, Notes,  
 Visual aids, Voice

Presentations, seminar, *see* Seminar  
 presentations

Press interviews 129–31

Prezi, use of 46–51  
 dashboard 47  
 share facility 48

Prototypes 62–4, 69

Public meetings 141–2

## Q

Questions  
 in group presentations 108–10  
 in presentations 20, 30–1, 34, 74–5,  
 79, 125, 129

## R

Reading a paper 37, 71, 78

Rehearsing presentations 53–4, 80, 95,  
 103–4, 107–8

Representing students, *see* Student  
 representatives

## S

Screencasting 51–3

Seminar papers 71–2  
 guest speakers 75–6  
 student-led 73–5  
 tutor-led 72–3  
*see also* Reading a paper, Asking  
 questions

Seminar presentations 78–9

Software for presentations, *see*  
 Prezi, PowToon, VideoScribe,  
 Screencasting

Speakers, number of 95, 111

Speaking to the press, *see* Press  
 interviews

Structure of presentations, *see*  
 Presentations, structure

Student representatives

choosing to stand 112–5  
 committee meetings 116–20  
 high-level committees 120–2  
 new student talks 124–6  
 open days 122–4  
 open meetings 115–6  
 Supervisions, *see* Tutorials

## T

Telephone in job searches  
 143–6

Telephone interviews 147–9

Timing, *see* Presentations, timing

Transferable skills 1

Tutorials 76–7

## V

Venue for presentations 103

Videocasting 47

VideoScribe 46, 50–1

Visual aids  
 accuracy 46, 57  
 advantages 35–6  
 appropriate use 38–9  
 backgrounds 44–5  
 backup 56–7  
 clarity 39–40  
 colour 43–4  
 content of 40–3  
 design of 39–42  
 font size and style 39–40  
 in group presentations 42  
 pauses for 19–20  
 pointer, use of 53–4  
 punctuation on 41–2  
 quality 36  
 rehearsal 53

Visual aid equipment  
 data projector 61–2, 81, 90  
 handouts 61–2, 81, 90  
 overhead projectors 60–1  
 Personal Response System (PRS)  
 57–8  
 Smartboard 53, 58–60

Visual aid software, *see* Prezi, PowToon,  
 VideoScribe, Screencasting

Vivas 91–3

## Voice

articulation 14–15  
breath control 10, 33  
clarity 14–16  
emphasis 16–19, 22, 34, 45  
local accents 14  
numbers 20–1, 40, 45  
pace 11–13, 124, 130  
pauses 11–12, 19–22  
pitch 2, 7, 9–10  
rhythms 16–17

tone 2

volume 6–10

Volume in speech, *see* Voice, volume

**W**

Words, choice of 3

Writing and speaking, differences  
between 82–3

**Y**

YouTube 47–78, 51, 52, 128, 150