



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

www.newcastle.edu.au

GIVING GREAT PRESENTATIONS

Do you start to feel anxious just at the thought of giving an oral presentation? Do you choose courses simply because they do not contain these presentations?

Take comfort in the knowledge that you are not alone. Most students get anxious when they have to talk in front of others.

Here are a few tips that will help to reduce your anxiety to a more manageable level.

Before the presentation

- Give yourself plenty of time to prepare the content of your talk and make sure you know it well. The more confident you are with your material the less anxiety you will experience.
- Practise giving your presentation in front of supportive family and friends. The more practice, the more confidence. The more confidence, the less anxiety.
- Use your imagination. A few times per day for at least a week prior to the presentation, imagine that you are presenting your talk in a clear and confident manner. Visualise the interest that the other students show towards the content of your talk.

Every time you do a presentation you will be building your confidence, making it just a little bit easier.



A PLACE OF OPPORTUNITY

Imagine your sense of achievement when you have confronted your fears and completed your presentation! Who knows where this may lead... a career as a university lecturer, a newsreader or even a politician?

On the day of the presentation

- Accept your anxious thoughts and feelings. The more you worry about these feelings the worse they will become. Your heart may be thumping madly but it's good to know that it will stay in your chest. Anxiety may not feel good but it certainly is energising!
- Affirmations can help, such as 'I'll be OK', 'I can do it'.
- You can reduce the intensity of your anxiety by slowing down your breathing. Count slowly to five as you breathe in and then count to five as you exhale.
- Relax your muscles as much as possible.
- Arrive slightly early for your talk. Rather than focusing on your anxiety, distract yourself by chatting with fellow students before the class begins.
- Remind yourself that your main task is to deliver information, not to give a wonderful performance.

During your presentation

- Accept your anxious feelings however try not to focus on them.
- Concentrate on the content of the material you are presenting.
- Increase the normal volume of your voice.
- Make an effort to speak more slowly (anxiety can cause you to rush your words).
- Maintain an upright sitting or standing posture (don't slouch). You can relax a bit by occasionally moving your body rather than standing or sitting too rigidly.
- Make eye contact with your fellow students. You'll realise that the vast majority are supportive. Remember that they too have been, or will be in the same situation.
- Give yourself permission to fumble your words, lose your place, 'go blank' and experience moments of confusion. These are all quite normal and they won't destroy your presentation.
- Avoid post mortems after your presentation as it is very easy to only focus on negatives and then blow them out of proportion. You can end up feeling a total failure irrespective of how well you may have performed. Why create such misery for yourself?

Where can I get help from others?

You can make an appointment with the University Counselling Service - it is free and confidential.

Callaghan:

Phone: 02 4921 5801

Email: counselling@newcastle.edu.au

Visit: Find us in the Hunter Building foyer near the Griffith Duncan Theatre

Ourimbah:

Phone: 02 4348 4060

Email: student-support-ourimbah@newcastle.edu.au

Visit: Student Support Unit, near the Library.

What other resources are available?

Other ideas about developing, delivering and preparing your presentation are available online.

Visit: www.newcastle.edu.au/service/studentssupport/learningsupport.html

Click on Resources and select the PDF "Giving Great Presentations".