

Reflection on oral presentation



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Giving good academic presentations in front of an audience may be a common issue for most students who are non-native English speakers. I have been delivered several oral presentations in individual and group scenario, but only a few attempts reached my expected effect. The ability to prepare high quality oral presentations is the competency standard for graduate engineers. Therefore, it is essential to reflect on my previous performance on oral presentations and try to develop implementation plans to overcome my weakness in the future.

Firstly, I tried to find out why the ability to give good oral presentations was so important to professional engineers. In professional engineer's career, for example, they may need to: persuade senior management to support their proposals, debate and negotiate with co-workers, address and motivate other employees and speak to members of a community and so on. Without the ability to communicate to an audience, management theory and practice is worth little. (Carolyn et. al. 2010).

But I did not realize the ability to deliver good quality oral presentations is an important attribute required by professional engineers. Usually, I treated the oral presentation as a task must be done at the university, not intended to practice and improve this necessary skill at each time. This kind behavior often be found from people who was lack of encouragement and motivation, obviously I belonged to this kind person. But I have decided to make applicable strategies to improve my oral presentation skills after some research have been done for the purpose of oral presentations.

Through the research, most books and articles have a common point was that many people feel nervous about speaking to an audience, but oral presentations can be successful with good planning and a systematic approach. The improvement of oral presentations can be achieved by focus on the key stages of a presentation: planning, preparing, practicing and presenting. (Carolyn et. al. 2010). Planning an oral presentation is to analyse an audience, determine primary purpose and select effective supporting information. (Carolyn et. l. 2010).

It is much like planning any other assignment. The presenter needs to do some research into the topic. Until the presenter gets a good general idea about the topic, the presenter can narrow down the focus, so that the presentation's content is more targeted. Based on my experience, the satisfied oral presentations were delivered when I was familiar with my topic or I had more interest to do research about the topic. It seemed that I did not take those opportunities as practice to improve my oral presentation skill.

To overcome this weakness, I have to pay more attention to the task of oral presentation and be more active and enthusiastic. Prepare an oral presentation is to prepare an outline (in general, follow a 3 part structure: introduction, body and conclusion), select appropriate visual aids, prepare an introduction and prepare a conclusion. (Carolyn et. al. 2010). I used to prepare my oral presentations follow these suggestions, and I believed I was good at planning and organizing things in a logical manner.

But my weakness was writing the speech, for example, to developing the main body of oral presentation. Because I did not realize speech writing is an

iterative process, it needs iteratively massaging the speech in its most effective form. (Carolyn et. al. 2010). But this necessary process often was procrastinated, so that there was little time to write a clear and fluent speech. Another useful tip suggested in Carolyn et. al. (2010) was to use visual aids, as if attendees do not understand what you are saying, they can still get your point from the slides.

This tip worked very well for non native speakers or speakers' spoken English is imperfect, for example, may be with a strong accent. I totally agreed with it, because I have benefitted from using visual aids in my previous presentations. Practice is the key. " Effective communication does not always come naturally, despite the impression of effortless given by outstanding presenters. " (Carolyn et. al. 2010). In my opinion practicing helps presenters identify missing vocabulary and express my ideas more fluently. Especially benefit from practicing in front of an audience, for example a few colleagues.

When I practice, I may find some words difficult to pronounce and in-fluent in some sentences. I can ask native speakers or check online dictionaries that offer audio spelling to correct or refine my pronunciation. Once again, my procrastination nature gave me not enough time to practice more, so that most of my oral presentations were unsatisfied by me. The applicable strategy to overcome this weakness might be prepare tasks ahead of schedule and practice till confident with what I am going to present.

Most people feel nervous about public speaking. Guffey et. l. (2007) provided some tips to help: take a few deep breaths to calm yourself, pretend you're

confident and act accordingly, speak more slowly and focus on your message and communicate it clearly. Based on my experience, these tips do help my presentations delivering more smoothly. But my weakness was unable to maintain audience's interest through using body language and voice. " To use body language which conveys confidence and which you feel comfortable with, and avoid that which creates barriers (to your voice, with the audience etc.). "(Guffey et. al. 2007).

Good presenters can use their voice to engage and interact with their audience, there are three important aspects need to be aware of and to develop: volume, pace and tone. (Guffey et. al. 2007). When I spoke slowly, pause between points, I could perform much better than normal. Because I felt I need to search for my words more often or for a longer time as I am a non-native speaker. All above discussed presented not only the strategies on how to improve oral presentation skills but also reflected on my personal experience gained from previous oral presentations delivered at the university.

In order to improve my oral presentation skills, I intend to enrich my vocabulary that is the foundation of delivering high quality oral presentation, especially important to non-native speakers. Be energized and enthusiastic to prepare for my speech topic, so that in-depth research can be done and get more time to practice without procrastination. Keep reading good books and articles introduce helpful technique to improve oral presentation skills for non-native speaker and ask help from native speak or online when meet difficulties with words and phrases.