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Research presentation content

It is crucial that the information you present is relevant and well researched. An audience needs to be confident that you and your organisation can be trusted to provide current and accurate information. Material that is not relevant, is of a poor quality or has no factual basis does not help promote the organisation.

Research should be appropriate to your topic, the purpose of the talk and the needs and interests of your audience. You may already have the information and data you need in the form of a report, the organisation's policies and procedures or other documentation relevant to the presentation. Sometimes you may have to do additional research by speaking with other professionals, contacting industry professional groups, reading articles in industry journals or conducting internet research.

Here are some tips for guiding your research.

Recent is best

Focus your research on the most recent findings, unless you specifically need earlier data.

Check your facts

Seek academic journals and papers for more-detailed information about a topic. Read the abstracts, which give a concise summary of the main body of the paper. Include anecdotal information to illustrate key points, give your presentation some interest to help the audience remember it afterwards.

Check your sources

Make sure you are not infringing copyright by reproducing information without permission; that you do not use confidential or restricted information without permission; or reveal any details that could cause distress for a staff member or client.

Reference appropriately

You may need to cite the sources you have referred to, particularly for formal presentations such as a conference. Use an accepted format to show where you have found your information. Be aware of plagiarism and copyright laws.

Example: prepare a delivery plan

A session delivery plan should be formatted so it is easy to refer to during your presentation.

Date: 23 August		
Venue: Conference Room 2, Westerway Council Offices, 28 Raven Street		
Time: 9.00 am to 12.45 pm		
Session plan		
Session name	WHS issues in the workplace	
Target audience	Team leaders and managers	
Learning outcomes	As a result of attending this program, participants should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the legal and practical responsibilities for providing a safe working environment • apply this knowledge to their own workplace • bring about changes in their own workplace to make it safer. 	
Name of presenter	Malcom Reid	
Duration of session	3 hours, 45 minutes	
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clock/watch • Pens and paper for participants to take notes • Whiteboard, whiteboard pens and eraser • Butcher's paper/large piece of paper • Data projector and prepared slides • TV and DVD player • DVD: 'WHS in the workplace - the do's and don'ts' • Handouts • Refreshments 	
Time	Content	Resources required/notes
9.00–9.35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why we are here • Learning outcomes • Housekeeping (WHS, breaks, contact details, getting help) 	
	Getting to know each other	Icebreaker activity
9.35–9.55	Introduction to WHS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current legislation • Duty-of-care responsibilities • Reporting hazards • WHS policies and procedures • Emergency procedures 	Slide notes
9.55–10.00	View DVD: 'WHS in the workplace – the do's and don'ts'	DVD

continued ...

Identify the target audience

Find out as much as you can about the people who will attend your presentation. The characteristics and needs of the audience determine how you structure and deliver the presentation, its length, the resources required and the presentation strategies you use. This also includes presentation skills you may need to be aware of, such as your rate of speech, tone and the specific language you use.

Some characteristics may lead you to seek advice and support from specialists such as language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) specialists, or organisations with expertise in working with different cultures or with learners who have special needs.



Gather audience information

How you gather information about the target audience depends on the number of people attending and the purpose of the presentation. If it is a large audience, it may not be practical or desirable for the organiser to gather details about individual audience members. It is important, however, that a process is available to participants to advise the organiser or presenter of any specific characteristics or needs that should be considered to ensure equitable participation and access to the venue and presentation. Presentations that occur in workplace settings provide a greater opportunity to gather information about individual audience members.

Here are some characteristics you need to consider when preparing a presentation.

Age of audience members

Various age groups interpret information differently. The target audience may be of diverse ages (in a presentation to a community group, for example) or the majority of members may be of a similar age (a presentation to a sporting team or school group). While it is important to avoid stereotyping the members of the target audience, be aware that their life experiences can shape the way they interpret information and respond to what you say.

When making a presentation to a group of people of a similar age, find out as much as you can about the characteristics of the group, including their preferred method for receiving information. For example, older audience members may prefer to receive printed materials rather than being given a DVD containing presentation materials.

Group activities

Participants may be divided into groups led by a facilitator or presenter. This technique may be used for discussing new ideas or when you wish people to actively participate in the presentation. Tasks for activities must be well prepared and timed. Groups should be monitored during the presentation to ensure understanding.

Presentation delivery

Choose ways in which you can deliver the presentation to suit the requirements of the presentation brief and the audience.

Here are some common strategies that can be applied individually or in combination to meet the needs of a presentation.

Presentation delivery strategies

Oral presentation



Oral presentations are excellent for sharing information quickly and efficiently with groups of people. Oral presentations:

- ensure that a whole group receives the same information at the same time
- are appropriate where low levels of audience participation will not impact on learning
- work best where the learning outcomes do not require skills practice
- may be recorded for further use.

Electronic presentation



Many presentations are delivered using an overhead projector and slides. This is suitable for small and large groups. It is useful for people who like to read written text as well as listen.

Handouts of the presentation are valuable for participants. The presenter can write delivery notes to accompany the slides in a section that is hidden to viewers.

Advantages of using computer presentations

- The software is easy to use.
- This type of presentation is relatively inexpensive to prepare and present.
- Presentations can be used on multiple platforms (face-to-face, LMS, social networking).
- You can revise and re-use the files.
- Artwork, animation, diagrams, audio or video can easily be integrated into this type of presentation.

Computer simulations

Computer simulations allow participants to interact with people and objects, solve problems and make decisions using software that seeks to replicate a particular environment.

Marketing specialists use simulations to immerse customers in an environment where they are able to trial products or services and understand features and benefits. There is evidence that potential buyers who have had the opportunity to use a product and develop a sense of ownership are more likely to make a purchase.

Interactive simulations and computer games provide learning through experience and are particularly useful in training presentations. There is evidence that simulations are useful for engaging the interest of inexperienced learners and those with low skill levels, and may also shorten learning times.

Consider the following aspects before selecting a simulation:

- Computer simulations may be expensive and time-consuming to develop and trial.
- Specialist developers, instructional designers and copywriters may be involved in this type of project.
- Arrange, where necessary, other facilitators or support staff to assist participants.
- Have a contingency plan to deal with technical issues.
- Investigate what opportunities exist for participants to continue to use the simulation after the presentation.
- Plan how you will create a record of the participants' experience of using the simulation.

Video and audio recordings

Video and audio recordings are effective for reinforcing content and demonstrating the application of concepts and ideas. Audiovisuals can be used to entertain, promote discussion, give other viewpoints or perspectives and share information from experts or industry leaders. However, these resources should be used with caution; they can be expensive and may quickly become dated.

Audio presentations may also be recorded and distributed online. When choosing a recording medium, consider audience access to technology. For example, a presentation for older people may miss its target market if it is only available as a podcast.

In the planning and preparation stage:

- always preview a resource before using it, as flaws in the recording or outdated fashion or technology can detract from its credibility

Use live action in presentations



Live action is cinematography not produced using animation. It is used extensively in advertising and marketing to show real people using products or services, and for online learning presentations. Content must be appropriate for the audience and avoid stereotypes.

Live action should be professionally recorded if it will be used to communicate information to customers. Check and comply with copyright restrictions before distributing video recorded by another person.

Use music in presentations



Music can be used to add interest and create a specific mood or atmosphere, or to emphasise and reinforce key concepts and ideas, or build brand awareness.

Select music that is appropriate for the audience. Check relevant organisational policies; and check and comply with any copyright restrictions. Investigate the suitability of the venue for broadcasting music during your presentation (acoustics, volume, equipment).

Use sound effects in presentations



Sound effects may be associated with the organisation's brand; used to emphasise important points; or used during demonstrations. Plan how you can use sound effects to maximum advantage. Using excessive or poorly chosen sound effects can distract the audience and detract from central ideas and concepts.

Confirm that the sound effects are culturally appropriate and unlikely to cause offence. Check copyright restrictions if you will be using sound effects from another source. Consider the technology required and capacity of venue acoustics to support effective sound effects.

Use black and white in presentations



Black and white offers a distinctive, contrasting effect in visual media, which can add drama or atmosphere. This is appropriate for communicating large amounts of text (it is often easier to read than colour text). White space is used to improve readability and for effect.

Using black and white is less expensive than colour and generally improves readability, but may be disconcerting for some audiences. Dramatic contrast can add interest or emphasise key points.

1D

Brief others involved in the presentation on their roles and responsibilities within the presentation

Whether you are making a presentation in your own work environment, for another organisation or in another venue, you need to collaborate with other people to ensure that each aspect of your presentation is delivered as planned. Establish and follow strategies for briefing others who are involved either directly in the presentation or in a behind-the-scenes capacity.

To avoid overlooking important detail, create a checklist or action plan that lists the activities to be undertaken before and during the presentation. During this planning stage, consider the method you will use to monitor whether everyone involved is on track with their assigned activities.



Brief others

The number of people involved in a presentation depends on the purpose of the presentation, the location, and the size of the target audience. You may be responsible for coordinating any other people involved in the presentation. Presentations that involve multiple speakers or that are strategic to the organisation such as a new product launch may be coordinated by a project team with roles assigned by a project leader.

You need teamwork, interpersonal and organisational skills to ensure that the other people involved in the presentation understand their roles and responsibilities, including how to read the schedule of required activities.

The importance of briefing others

No two presentations are exactly the same. A range of variables, including content, objectives, target audience, presenter, timing and venue can shape the preparation and delivery of the presentation. Your briefing must ensure that the people who are contributing to the presentation have all the information they need to be able to complete their tasks in a timely manner and to the required standard.

Do not assume that if a person has completed similar tasks for another presentation they will know what the expectations are for your presentation. A briefing should clearly explain what the other person is required to contribute specifically to this presentation. You can then refer to the briefing in subsequent discussions leading up to the presentation, using it as a checklist in the final stages of preparation and even during the presentation, if required.

Specific administrative responsibilities

There may be a number of people directly or indirectly involved with the presentation who you need to include in any briefings.

Here is a description of the specific responsibilities of various internal and external people who may be involved in providing technical and administrative support.

Here are some tips for communicating the brief to others.

Communicating the brief

- Details of the brief can be given verbally and later confirmed in writing, addressing any questions or issues that were discussed in the verbal briefing.
- Provide the date of the presentation, venue, purpose, the coordinator's contact details, an outline of the contributor's role and responsibilities.
- Contributors can be given a communication plan that describes the process for liaison in the lead-up to the presentation.
- Remember that you need to maintain regular contact with these people during the preparation for the presentation.
- Identify and follow the policies and procedures of the location where you are delivering your presentation.
- Always consider the communication needs of people from diverse backgrounds and abilities when sharing information.
- Ensure that you include an opportunity for the other person to ask questions and clarify your requirements.

Example: brief others in a presentation

Ken is to provide a group learning presentation to new members of his team. The purpose is to provide them with the skills and knowledge required to operate and maintain a chainsaw with a concrete-cutting blade. Ken knows from experience that he needs to allow ample time to organise this type of presentation.

Expert staff operators, Lloyd and Peter, will assist Ken during the presentation by each overseeing a group of three learners. Ken, Lloyd and Peter meet at the training venue a week before the session and discuss their responsibilities. Together they complete the following tasks:

- Confirm the standard operating procedures for the task.
- Carry out a risk assessment.
- Review a portfolio of documents that includes learner notes and learner guides, operating procedures for the chainsaw, safety information, incident reports and emergency procedures.

Ken arranges to meet with Lloyd and Peter 30 minutes before the presentation to revise the key points from the briefing.

Ken contacts the college's facilities officer to book the use of Workshop 1 for the presentation. Ken completes a form that is available on the college's intranet to advise the facilities officer of his technology and furniture requirements for the session.

Because using a chainsaw is a high-risk activity, there are also WHS and risk and hazard assessment processes that Ken must follow. Ken's session plan and risk mitigation procedures need the approval of the WHS officer. Ken completes the appropriate forms and submits these for approval.

When it needs evaluating

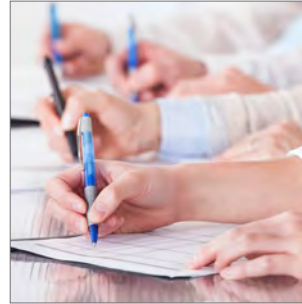
Evaluating immediately after a presentation can be worthwhile to review presentation techniques and delivery style, although sufficient time may need to pass before the outcomes are met. For example, a presentation to promote a new product may be evaluated by checking sales figures for the following month.

Here are some tips for evaluating before and after a presentation.



Before the presentation

Arrange for a sample audience (customers, a critical friend or a mentor) to observe a rehearsal and give you constructive feedback. Adopt a positive attitude to any changes they suggest and evaluate these against the intended outcomes of the presentation. Refine the presentation so the audience is more likely to enjoy the session and give you positive feedback about your delivery style.



After the presentation

Conduct the evaluation immediately following the conclusion of the presentation. Provide a questionnaire to complete and hand in. People are generally motivated to share their feelings and communicate directly with the presenter. Immediate post-presentation evaluation is likely to receive a greater number of responses than evaluations conducted at a later stage.

How to use evaluation methods

Your preparation for the presentation is not complete unless you have selected the evaluation tool you intend to use. You should be guided by any information in your workplace policies and procedures that recommends a preferred evaluation method.

You can expect that if you choose to use questionnaires completed at the end of your session as your only evaluation tool, the quality of the information you gather may not be sufficient enough for you to conduct a meaningful analysis of your presentation and identify opportunities for improvement.

Evaluation methods may include:

- focus groups
- one-on-one interviews
- participant surveys
- critical friends
- action research.

Example: a feedback form

A well-constructed feedback form can provide valuable information about a presentation. Here is a commonly used feedback form.

Please complete this survey and hand it in to the facilitator.		
Rating: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = strongly disagree, 5 = doesn't apply		
		Comments
1. The venue was appropriate	1 2 3 4 5	
2. Facilities were comfortable and accessible.	1 2 3 4 5	
3. The presenter was knowledgeable.	1 2 3 4 5	
4. The content was what I needed and easily understood.	1 2 3 4 5	
5. The style of presentation was engaging.	1 2 3 4 5	
6. The use of aids and technology was appropriate and helpful.	1 2 3 4 5	
7. The length of the presentation was appropriate.	1 2 3 4 5	
8. Support was provided to those in the audience who needed it.	1 2 3 4 5	
9. Handout material was valuable.	1 2 3 4 5	
Additional comments:		
Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey.		

2A

Explain and discuss the desired outcomes of the presentation with the audience

The introduction to a presentation sets the scene for what is to come. It allows the audience to settle in as the facilitator describes how the presentation will be conducted.

The introduction is one part of the presentation you can safely assume audience members will not interrupt. Practise explaining the intended outcomes of the session aloud, perhaps with a 'critical friend' observing and giving feedback on whether the outcomes are described in a way that make them relevant to the audience.

Use the introduction to:

- provide an 'acknowledgment of country' to respect Aboriginal people who own the land on which the presentation is occurring
- welcome the audience and begin to build rapport
- introduce yourself and establish your credibility with the audience
- explain the purpose and intended outcomes of the presentation
- outline the structure of the presentation
- explain housekeeping arrangements, including WHS information
- explain any activities the audience may be asked to undertake
- let the audience know that they will be asked to give feedback on the presentation.

Presentation introductions

Even experienced presenters can be nervous before beginning a presentation. However, if you are well-prepared and well-rehearsed (without over-rehearsing to the point where you may appear stilted and insincere) you will feel more in control of the presentation. Your most effective tool for overcoming nerves is a carefully prepared session plan, along with presentation aids and materials you have tested and a clear idea of what you are aiming to achieve.

Your initial comments to the audience should engage their interest and begin developing rapport. Here are some tips to get you started.

Build a rapport

The words you choose and the way you deliver them will immediately affect the audience's impression of you. A confident start demonstrates that you are in control and that they should pay attention. Create a positive impression by clearly telling the audience why they are there and what you are going to do for them.

Use aids correctly and effectively

Watch experienced presenters and see how they use aids and materials to enhance their presentations. It takes practice to handle technology efficiently and to use printed material effectively so the presentation is delivered smoothly and engages the audience.

Always keep in mind that the methods and aids you use are there to reinforce the message of your presentation and help the audience understand the ideas and concepts contained in the content. Depending on the type of presentation, there may be a presentation pack that holds a summary, presentation notes and additional resources.

Let the audience know if they are required to take notes during the presentation; remember that lights may have been dimmed.

Here are some suggestions for using aids correctly and effectively.

Using presentation aids



Slide presentations

Check that the slides can be read from various points in the venue. Position yourself to the side of the screen so you do not obstruct the audience's view.

Avoid turning to read from the slides. Instead, face the audience so you can look people in the eye. Be guided by your own notes or use the handout view function.

Be familiar with using a laser pointer; but only use it when necessary otherwise it becomes annoying for the audience.



Diagrams, charts and posters

Ensure that the visual aids you have chosen and prepared look professional, are visible to all parts of the audience and enhance the presentation.

If you are using presentation graphics software, provide notes pages and encourage the audience to use them to record key points about your message. Invite audience interaction, comment and discussion about diagrams or charts by asking questions.



Models

Integrating models into your presentation can cause interruptions to the flow of a presentation if people have to move around. Make sure models are easily accessible to participants.

It may be better to use diagrams or computer graphics during the presentation and provide physical models for the audience to look at during a break. Be sure the models are clearly explained, so when people inspect them they understand what they are looking at.

Nonverbal cues

Nonverbal cues are often very subtle and may not always be a reliable way to establish if a problem exists. A combination of cues, however, can be more useful.

Consider also the influence of culture on communication. The way people communicate can reflect their cultural backgrounds; for example, in some Asian cultures a person nodding their head is not necessarily signalling that they agree with you. Wherever possible, be aware of the cultural makeup of your audience so you can take any cultural differences into consideration.

Here are examples of positive and negative nonverbal cues.



Positive nonverbal cues

Be alert to nonverbal cues that indicate if the presentation is going well and the planned outcomes are likely to be achieved.

Examples that show that participants are responding positively to the presentation include:

- smiling
- leaning forward
- nodding
- watching the presenter.



Negative nonverbal cues

Nonverbal cues indicating a negative response such as disagreement or boredom include:

- shrugging
- shaking the head or opening palms
- facial expressions showing surprise, or frowning with confusion or disbelief
- sighs, tongue-clicking or grunts.

2D Use persuasive communication techniques to secure audience interest

Presentations of all types rely on communicating the central message successfully to the target audience. Where the objective of the presentation is to encourage the target audience to take action or change their attitudes or beliefs, you also need to use communication techniques that have the power to persuade.

Effective communication is the key to any presentation. You need to connect with the audience, use language that is accessible to everyone and keep them interested. Once you have their interest, you can use the remainder of the presentation to convince them of the idea or concept and, hopefully, gain their agreement to take specific action.

Verbal communication techniques

Speak clearly, using an appropriate tone, pace and volume. Vary the pitch of your voice to avoid a monotone presentation that encourages boredom in listeners. Consider individual differences and the audience's ability to listen and understand what is being said. You may need to adjust the way you speak. For example, you may need to speak more slowly and clearly for people whose first language is not English. Keep your voice at its usual volume, though. Shouting does not increase a person's ability to understand English.

Use language that can be understood and assimilated by the target audience. Pitching language or information at the wrong level can reduce the effectiveness of your communication. Effective verbal communication relies on you using the appropriate structure, vocabulary, emphasis and supporting materials to suit your audience's characteristics.

Here are some language principles to keep in mind when delivering a presentation.

Technical jargon

Use technical and industry jargon only to people you know will understand. Always consider the audience's background and what they are likely to know. If such language is crucial to the presentation, then define technical words and phrases and confirm participants' understanding.

Colloquial words and phrases

Avoid using Australian colloquialisms or slang that may confuse people whose first language is not English. Terms such as 'She'll be right' and 'We'll cover that in the arvo' may be meaningless to many people and may lead to misunderstandings.

Non-discriminatory language

Always use non-discriminatory and inclusive language. Repeating the word 'he' when you mean both males and females can be off-putting to many people.
Don't use sexist language or cultural stereotypes that are likely to offend participants.

2E

Provide opportunities for participants to seek clarification, and adjust the presentation to meet participant needs and preferences

Presenters use comments and questions to gauge the audience's reaction to presentation content. Astute presenters interpret the clues given in the audience's questions and comments and adjust their presentation strategies to make the content more appealing to the target audience.

A positive sign that participants are engaged and interested in a presentation is their eagerness to ask questions. Questions about presentation content, whether they seek clarification or express views, indicate that participants are processing information and thinking about how the presentation's content applies to their own situation or context.



Provide opportunities for people to ask questions

Always provide time for the audience to interact or to query an issue. Some people feel let down if they are not allowed to comment or pose a question to the presenter about an issue that arises from the presentation.

Set the ground rules for asking and answering questions in your introduction to the presentation. Explain to the audience when you will take questions.

Here are strategies to use to take questions.

At the start

It is useful to provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions after you have made the introductory remarks and set the scene for the presentation. Participants may need clarification of concepts or ideas early on, and may become distracted or frustrated, and not understand later material if they have to hold their question until the conclusion. They may forget their question or have difficulties making a cognitive link back to earlier information. It also lets them know that you are willing to explain anything they are unsure of and are flexible to change any aspect of the presentation to suit their needs. If you prefer questions at the end of the presentation, consider having an assistant record the questions for you to respond to later in the presentation.

Adjust the presentation

Reflect on the types of information that participants want clarified and determine whether it is necessary to adjust the presentation in some way. Adjustments often relate to reassessing delivery style so it is more responsive to the characteristics of the target audience.

Respond to participants respectfully and avoid showing frustration or annoyance if it becomes clear that some participants have not assimilated the information presented. Think on your feet to identify and overcome any barriers to communication. During the presentation, check whether any adjustments you have made are having the desired effect.

There are a number of actions you can take to adjust the presentation to address the needs of the target audience and ensure the intended outcomes are achieved.

Making adjustments to a presentation

- Slow the pace of your delivery and reinforce central ideas.
- Use more inclusive language and examples to ensure your message is more easily understood by people with diverse backgrounds and abilities.
- Use a variety of delivery techniques to explain important concepts and skills.
- Give constructive feedback to build confidence.
- Arrange additional materials that are appropriate for LLN proficiency of the group.
- Access specialist assistance, equipment or technology to support participants with additional needs.

Example: adjust a presentation

Mahtab is a team leader in a bank contact centre. She has been invited by the local secondary college to present a talk on banking as a career, current banking methods and financial products and services that banks provide.

Mahtab introduces herself and explains what she is going to talk about. She asks if there are any questions but the students are quiet. She delivers the first part of the talk using a keynote presentation that takes 10 minutes. At the end, Mahtab asks learners if they have any questions.

Mahtab is surprised to find that many of the participants are now asking her questions that indicate they have minimal knowledge about the general range of services offered by banks and the types of careers offered. She spends more time than she has allocated clarifying the basic services used by retail banking customers.

During the coffee break, Mahtab reflects on the characteristics of her audience. She makes an educated guess that with the advent of new technologies, many of the group may not have visited a branch and are only familiar with online banking.

Mahtab realises she has made incorrect assumptions about the group's current knowledge and that she will need to adjust her presentation. She needs to explain terminology in more detail, use case studies to demonstrate product benefits and encourage the participants to ask questions during the session rather than waiting until the end.



Example: summarise key concepts

Cindy is delivering a presentation on overcoming language barriers when interacting with staff and customers. Cindy has divided the two-hour presentation into three topics, with a break between topics 2 and 3:

- Topic 1: Identifying the cultural mix
- Topic 2: Identifying a range of communication barriers
- Topic 3: Identifying strategies to overcome the barriers

After she presents the first topic, Cindy pauses and checks the whiteboard where she has listed the cultural mix she has brainstormed with participants. She prints these out and distributes them as a reminder to the group.



During the second topic, she describes case studies and stories from her experiences of people who are disengaged because of communication barriers. She then stops and asks questions to reinforce the reasons for the barriers.

During the break she speaks with participants to gauge their understanding and interest. They begin to tell her stories from their own neighbourhood and relate what has been discussed to their personal experiences.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Cindy debriefs the group. She knows that in a session involving multiple delivery methods (instruction, brainstorming and discussion) there is a risk that people may lose focus. A clear, brief summary of the key ideas that have been covered in the session will help consolidate the learning and understanding.


Cindy presents a PowerPoint slide listing the key concepts, and includes these in the printed materials given to the group. She has planned a follow-up session to explore people's experiences based on the ideas she has discussed, so encourages them to read the material before the next session.

Practice task 11

Why is it important to reinforce key concepts during a presentation?

Here are some steps to follow when implementing a focus group.

Implement a focus group



- Seek the services of an experienced facilitator. It is not wise to conduct the group yourself if you have been the presenter. Arrange for the facilitator to debrief you or have an audiovisual recording made of the session.
- Provide a suitable venue; a questionnaire with structured and unstructured questions; supporting material; and refreshments if required.
- The session should allow people to interact, share their experiences and perceptions and bounce ideas off each other. Focus group interaction is used to generate data; questions should encourage participant interaction rather than having them answer the facilitator directly.
- Allow time to explore ideas generated by the group and pursue interesting comments by asking more probing questions.
- Responses may be written on a whiteboard.

Seek feedback

Before the presentation, ensure the person you have asked to review your presentation understands their role in providing feedback, the intended outcomes of the session, how they will record their observations, and how they are to provide feedback.

Ask them to observe you and record feedback during your presentation on the review form you have prepared. Encourage them to be honest and provide as much information as they wish. You can also have a casual conversation afterwards to discuss and clarify some of the comments made.

Their feedback may challenge you, question you, offer you a different perspective and support your critical reflection.

Here is an example of a blank feedback form for an observer.

Presentation observation checklist	
Presenter:	Presentation title:
Opening How did the presenter establish their credibility?	
Delivery Comment on eye contact, body language, voice, language, humour, enthusiasm, sincerity, nervousness, preparation, pauses, use of notes, etc.	
Persuasion Comment on use of word pictures, evidence, stories, positive vocabulary, positive gesturing	

Example: use feedback to make improvements

Here are some examples of how feedback can be used to change the central idea presented to the target audience.

Example 1

Central idea

The marketing team make a presentation to a focus group during the preliminary stage of a project to rebrand the company as 'green' (environmentally responsible).

Feedback

The focus group are positive in response to the 'greening' of the company and agree that a new logo and advertisements to promote the company as environmentally responsible.

They give a negative reaction to the use of a controversial environmentalist as a key figure in advertisements.

Changes

The marketing team prepare a report summarising the outcomes of the focus group interviews and recommend that a musician with strong links to environmental issues be used in the advertisements instead.

Example 2

Central idea

A team leader has prepared a presentation to promote his organisation's safety record. It is to be delivered at a national conference. The key message is delivered through a series of case studies. He practises on his staff, and then asks them to complete the feedback form he has developed.

Feedback

Analysis of the surveys completed by participants indicates that many of the case studies used are too specific and may not be relevant to a wider audience. The presentation seems too formal and the presenter paid too much attention to legislation and theory.

Changes

The presenter consults with the WHS Officer to gather more relevant case studies and to translate the theory into information more relevant to the target audience.

continued ...