

Planning a group presentation.

At UniSA group presentations are common assessment tasks. Usually each group has a set time limit to prepare and present on set topics to their classmates. This requires quite a high level of cooperation between group members who may not know each other before working together on their presentation

This type of assessment task develops your team work and public speaking skills. Group presentations are often evaluated on the quality of the overall group effort as well as on each member's individual presentation. The success of the group depends on

- the quality of your planning
- your understanding of individual and group goals
- everyone's commitment to agreed targets
- successful problem solving
- the group's as well as your own final performance.

Group members need to reach early agreement on goals, timeline and approaches to collaboration. These four steps are useful.

STEP #1: Group and Task Orientation

It is a mistake to assume a common understanding of the task and what individuals and the group are meant to achieve. These need to be thoroughly discussed with reference to any guidelines and agreed criteria in your course outline.

A. *establish yourselves as a group*

- set a time to meet so that you can learn who everyone is (exchange names, phone numbers, addresses, etc.) and
- agree on how you will work together (form a schedule of meetings, a record keeping and messaging process, individual roles e.g. minute taker, etc).

The *Working in teams* online guide could help you identify your group strengths and weaknesses (Learning Connection website).

B. *analyse the group task*

You cannot assume that you all have a common understanding of the task and what individuals and the group are meant to achieve. Together you need to analyse

- the topic
- what your group is expected to do
- the criteria that will be used to assess your presentation.

STEP #2: Scoping the project

There are a number of elements of any group presentation that need to be discussed and agreed on quite quickly. As a team it will be useful to:

- map the whole task and identify any special requirements e.g. use of handouts, audio-visual aids, models, resources
- agree on who will do what: team leader, minutes of meetings, other
- develop a chart for all group members showing the complete project

Stage	Task	Useful Resources	Group member	Completion date	Comments/Issues
1					
2					

- establish a schedule of meetings (agreed dates and venues). Electronic discussion can be useful to planning but you will need a minimum number of meetings, including a rehearsal, to ensure the quality of your presentation. Your meeting schedule must take everyone's commitments into account.
- Discuss trouble-shooting: who will do what if there are group issues? e.g. deal with members who are over-bearing, miss meetings, fall behind, take on too much or fail to contribute?

STEP #3. Develop a review process

Use individual members' special skills to develop a systematic approach to monitoring your progress. Build on any special talents and experience in the group e.g. A-V or public speaking experience. Think about how you will:

- review members' progress against goals in the chart?
- give practical and encouraging feedback to each other?
- identify gaps in the material?
- re-allocate work if some parts prove easier or harder than others
- support team members with particular needs e.g. students adjusting to studying in Australia, students not accustomed to working in groups, students with special needs e.g. performance anxiety.

STEP #4. Plan the final presentation

Once you've established your overall process and group goals you need to discuss HOW to orally present the material the group is gathering. Refer again to assessment criteria and then

- decide on a presentation format and order of speakers
- agree on audio/visual aids for the presentation
- decide on the physical arrangements for the presentation e.g. time of arrival, room's seating arrangement, use of aids, handover of speakers, tidy up etc
- schedule rehearsals as a group and as individuals (peer review each other).

References

Giving a talk 2007, University of Southampton. Viewed 5 June 2007. <http://www.academic-skills.soton.ac.uk/studyguides/Giving%20a%20Talk.doc>.

Working in teams 2007, Learning Connection, UniSA. viewed 5 June 2007. <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learn/learningconnection/?PATH=/Resources/workshop%2Dcounselling/Working+in+teams/&default=Welcome.htm>.