Teaching English Presentation Skills in Japan

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Introduction

Two of the most important developments in the recent history of English second language teaching have undoubtedly been the attempt to demonstrate the system of meaning that lies behind the communicative uses of language (i.e., the Communicative Approach), and the description of the discourse properties of language (i.e., Discourse Analysis). The former focuses on discrete elements of language at the sentence level called functions and notions; the latter makes use of larger, extended segments of language known as text, in which the underlying organizational patterns of the language can be discovered. However, just as many educators today have begun to realize that effective language teaching requires a common-sense balance between structural (i.e., grammatical) and communicative approaches, they have also discovered that Discourse Analysis is of relatively little practical value for classroom teachers who are trying to provide their students with an understanding of the ways in which information is organized in English, or how to help students structure and communicate their ideas fluently and effectively.

In an eloquent criticism of these and other modern theories and approaches to language teaching, ESL textbook writer Robert O'Neill states:

> We have all become aware in the last 20 years or so of units beyond the sentence — of things referred to today as cohesion and coherence. It is easier to label them than it is to develop effective strategies of helping learners to organize their spoken and written language coherently and cohesively. And it is painfully obvious that lists of functions and notions, as useful as they are in referring to units at and below the sentence level, tell us little or nothing about the larger units of language. Perhaps the only discipline that has ever attempted seriously, not only to define these larger units, but also to come to terms with teaching them, is the now forgotten Art of Rhetoric. We desperately need a modern equivalent of it, [as] it would seem that the only thing Discourse Analysis has yet delivered is an ever more elaborate meta-language for referring to the phenomenon. (1989, p. 7)

In a similar vein, William West, in his work training diplomats in English at the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Service (*gaimu shou kenshuu jo*) notes that "use of the classical rhetorical pattern of exposition for professional teachers among whom it is currently in disfavor...provides an effective base for simple, direct communication, [and is] an invaluable tool in...teaching [speech communication skills]" (1989, p. 25).

Because all of the earliest theories of communication in the Western tradition, both spoken and written, went under the name "rhetoric," and because the study of rhetoric appears to have some potential in helping foreign language students to understand the organizational principles underlying English, before turning our attention to the practical details of teaching presentation skills, let us first briefly examine the history of this discipline in the hope of arriving at a clear and comprehensive definition of the term.

A Brief History of Rhetoric

"Speech-making as a practice and rhetoric as a study of the principles which underlie and direct that practice are as old as recorded history" (Ehninger, 1965, p. 165). The origins of the Art of Rhetoric in the Western tradition are to be found in the Hellenic world of the fifth century B.C. at which time the great oratorical traditions of public address began to be systematically developed. Rhetoric in this period was closely allied with other studies, such as aesthetics, logic, and ethics, and was considered a means for communicating great and serious ideas in public forums such as legislative assemblies or courtrooms. Aristotle, at about 336 B.C., wrote probably the most important ancient treatise on public speaking, now known as *The Rhetoric*, and argued that rhetoric consisted of "modes of reasoning upon which decisions in the realm of human affairs are based" (ibid., p. 169).

"In oratory and rhetoric, as in so much else, the Romans were heirs to the Greeks [and] Roman oratory, by and large, was an imitation of Greek models, [which] did little more than elaborate, refine, and systematize doctrines originally staked out by Aristotle" (ibid.). Cicero and Quintilian were famous Roman rhetoricians of their times, but with the fall of the Republic, the coming of empire, and the curbing of individual freedoms, the art of public speaking in Rome went into decline.

From Augustus on, for the next thousand years, due to the increasing dominance of ecclesiastical authority, oratory was largely confined to ceremonial occasions or to the schoolroom. Nevertheless, undergraduate education in medieval times "consisted chiefly of the *trivium*: grammar, logic, and rhetoric" (Jordan, 1965, p. 1).

With the arrival of the Renaissance and the development of free institutions in the Western world, rhetoric and public address began to regain much of their ancient dignity. This classical revival was initially opposed, however, by an authoritarian philosophy of government, the divine right of kings, which "limited public discourse to the role of courtly address and made it...a branch of the 'science' of manners, or etiquette [effectively

divorcing] rhetoric from its traditional responsibility for substance or content and [reducing] it to a study of style and delivery" (Ehninger, 1965, p. 171). This is perhaps the origin of one of the pejorative connotations of the term today as a type of elocutionary posturing or discourse devoid of real meaning (i.e., "mere rhetoric").

However, the classical revival of rhetoric provided the foundation for the important tradition of scholastic disputation, "a question-and-answer procedure used not only for academic instruction but also for exploring problems in philosophy, theology, and even in the sciences" (idid.). This revival reached its apex in the British Parliament and French Revolutionary Assembly where modern parliamentary speaking first emerged and which witnessed some of the greatest deliberative oratory of all time. In America, as well, the development of free institutions led to an environment in which "the 'talker', along with the soldier and frontiersman, was a recognized folk hero" (ibid. p. 173), and great Senatorial debaters argued the important social issues of the time. In education "rhetoric was an important part of the university curriculum...and as late as the nineteenth century, colleges had departments of rhetoric" (Jordan, 1965, p. 1).

In the twentieth century the introduction of radio and television has helped promote fundamental changes in speaking style, and "as public address of the modern period differs in character and substance from that of the ancient world, so modern rhetoric is...different from its classical counterpart" (Ehninger, 1965, p. 176). In the latter half of this century the study of rhetoric has fallen into disfavor in the educational institutions of the Western world, and along with Latin, has largely been expunged from most modern curricula.

Up until the 1940s and 1950s, in university courses designed to teach composition and public speaking skills, the study of rhetoric was considered to be essential. Students were typically required to be familiar with the speeches of the great orators of the past and were well instructed in the basic patterns of English rhetorical organization (see, for example, Mallery, 1953; Rorabacher, 1946). Perhaps the most important legacy of this more traditional approach to language pedagogy, especially in terms of teaching presentation skills today, however, is the simple classical rhetorical pattern of exposition — the five-division composition which is so effective in many different applications.[1]

By the 1960s, educators had begun to alter their approach to teaching language skills, due perhaps to the pedantic and prescriptive nature of more traditional methods. One of the most significant changes has been the almost complete separation of writing and speaking skills in most modern university education. Speech communication courses are now generally found in the Faculty of Fine Arts and offer various specialties such as classes in speech science, public address, theatre, oral interpretation, etc., although traditional terminology is rarely used anymore. The teaching of writing skills, on the other hand, has largely disappeared from many university curricula in English-speaking countries today. The courses that remain generally take the form of special remedial English classes for freshmen students, or workshops in creative writing, which generally focus on the creative content of compositions rather than on their formal organization and structure. Many

textbooks today emphasize writing as a process rather than a product, and close error correction is discouraged (see, for example, Raines, 1992; White & Arndt, 1991).

To a large degree, many of the changes that have taken place in the past 30 years which make the creative process more accessible for students have been beneficial, but teachers in other disciplines, especially the hard sciences, as well as leaders in the business community have become increasingly vocal in their criticism of the inability of modern students to think analytically and communicate their ideas coherently. This has led to a demand for curriculum reform in the field of language arts, and like O'Neill, many educators are calling for the implementation of "a modern equivalent of the forgotten Art of Rhetoric."

Rhetoric, Language, & Culture

Today, most dictionaries (see, for example, *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1990) define rhetoric primarily as the study of the principles and rules of composition, as well as skill in the effective use of speech, while stipulating that it can sometimes also denote insincere or grandiloquent (i.e., lofty, pompous) language. It might be more accurate, however, to describe both written compositions and speech-making as goals, while rhetoric itself is the study of the organizing principles which underlie and direct our efforts towards attaining these goals. To put it another way, "at one end of its range [of meanings] rhetoric is concerned with the ordering of ideas.... At the other end it is concerned with the presentation of ideas in language" (Jordan, 1965, p. 3).

However, the way in which we order and organize our ideas is very much dependent on our mother tongue and on the culture into which we are born. In other words, rhetoric is not universal, but varies in important ways as a result of linguistic and cultural variables.

• **Expository Writing Styles: English & Asian Models**

In a pioneering study of how the expository writing styles of five language groups (English, Semitic, Oriental, Romance, and Russian) are influenced by linguistic and cultural variables, Kaplan (1966) states that mother tongue patterns of rhetorical organization from other languages will often be transferred to English language compositions with largely negative effects.

Bander (1978, p. 3) also notes that "in following a direct line of development, an English paragraph is very different, for instance, from an Oriental paragraph, which tends to follow a circular line of development." English rhetoric, which is based on Anglo-European cultural patterns, is linear.[2] "A good English paragraph begins with a general statement of its content and then carefully develops that statement with a series of specific illustrations" (Oshima & Hogue, 1991, p. 30). There are many variations to this style, but the flow of ideas always occurs in a straight line from the opening sentence to the final sentence. Furthermore, "a well-structured English paragraph is never digressive. There is

nothing that does not belong to the paragraph and nothing that does not support the topic sentence" (ibid.). Many Asian writers, on the other hand, use an indirect approach. "In this kind of writing, the topic is viewed from different angles; it is rarely analyzed directly and is referred to only indirectly. Such a development in an English paragraph is awkward and unnecessarily vague to an English reader" (ibid., p. 31).

• Japanese & English Rhetorical Styles

Hinds (1983), in a comparison of Japanese and English rhetorical organization, comments on the negative results that arise when native speakers of Japanese write compositions in English based on a Japanese organizational pattern. An important rhetorical style in Japanese which does not exist in English is termed *ki-shou-ten-ketsu*. It is a pattern which originated in Classical Chinese poetry and can be defined as follows (see Hinds, 1983, p. 188):

• *ki*	First, begin one's argument.
• *shou*	Next, develop that.
• *ten*	At the point where this development is finished,
	turn the idea to a sub-theme where there is a connection,
	but not a directly connected association (to the major theme).
• *ketsu*	Lastly, bring all of this together and reach a conclusion.

As Hinds notes, "the differences between this organizational schema and those familiar to English should be clear. The third point, *ten*, is the development in a theme which English language compositions do not have. It is the intrusion of an unexpected element into an otherwise normal progression of ideas" (ibid.). Of importance for ESL learners is the fact that *ten* is an abrupt departure from the linear flow of ideas and introduces elements that would be considered irrelevant by English-speaking audiences. In addition, *ketsu* in Japanese and "conclusion" in English have very different meanings. In English a conclusion generally summarizes the main points of the composition or paraphrases the thesis statement and often draws a conclusion or evaluates what has been presented. According to Takemata (1976, pp. 26−27), however, for Japanese language compositions "a conclusion need not be decisive [*danteiteki*]. All it needs to do is to indicate a doubt or ask a question." As Hinds states, "clearly there is a different set of principles operating in the Japanese composition" (ibid., p. 190).

• East Asian & Western Discourse Strategies

In an analysis of East Asian and Western discourse patterns, Scollon & Scollon appear to support the observations described above. They note that when Asians speak in English to native English speakers from other parts of the world, there is usually "little difficulty in understanding at the level of the words and sentences...[but there is often] a feeling that it

is not quite clear what the speaker's main point is" (1995, p. 1). They suggest that this confusion in interpreting the main point of another's speech is the result of the use of "different principles of discourse to organize...presentations" (ibid.). According to the Scollons, Asian speakers in general use a "topic–comment" pattern of organization in which the main point (or comment) is delayed until sufficient background information has been provided:

Topic [background / reasons] ⇨ Comment [main point / action suggested]

Western speakers of English, on the other hand, expect a discourse strategy in which a discussion is opened with the introduction of a speaker's main point, which can then be developed by the speaker or reacted to by others. This type of pattern is known as "comment–topic":

Comment [main point / action suggested] ⇨ Topic [background / reasons]

"This difference in discourse patterns leads the westerner to focus on the opening stages of the discourse as the most crucial while the Asian speaker will tend to look for the crucial points to occur somewhat later" (ibid., p. 2). The Scollons suggest that as a result of these differing discourse strategies "unfair and prejudicial stereotypes" arise: e.g., "the 'inscrutable' Asian or the frank and rude westerner" (idid.).

• **The Sequencing of Information in Japan & America**

In an article entitled "Speaking English with a Japanese Mind," Sen Nishiyama confirms the Scollons' hypothesis. He notes that "Japanese who speak English are likely to express themselves using a style and vocabulary originating in Japanese [and that] the sequence of information expressed in Japanese differs from the usual sequence in English" (1995, p. 27). He goes on to recount a story in which Akio Morita, the former CEO of Sony Corporation, was describing differences between the two languages in a talk with American business executives:

> He gave the example of an American businessman proposing a project to his Japanese counterpart. The American explains each point, which is punctuated by the English-speaking Japanese responding, 'Yes.' After the American finishes, the Japanese starts with a long dissertation about how interesting the project sounds and relates the studies his company has been conducting on similar ideas. The American assumes that the proposal is going to be accepted. But the dissertation drags on, and the American's attention begins to wane. Then the Japanese says, 'However.' 'That's when you have to start listening very carefully,' Mr. Morita warned, 'because the real answer comes after that word.' (ibid.)

As Nishiyama points out, speaking well in another language requires "more than a

knowledge of grammar and a large vocabulary. It requires familiarity with the communicating behavior of the speakers of [that] language, their social mores, [and cultural] values" (ibid.).

• **Japanese Oratory & Rhetorical Organization**

These differences in cultural values and rhetorical patterns of organization underlying English and Japanese can also be seen in the field of public address. William West (1989, pp. 26-27) offers the following vivid description of Japanese oratory:

> None [of my students], however, had ever prepared a straight, simple, linear presentation of an idea. In Japan, one does not 'lay out' or expose (exposition) a proposition for discussion and consideration. The usual pattern is to approach an audience fawningly and apologetically, discuss casually a number of insignificant and unrelated items, and then almost as an after-thought mention the primary subject. But even after *almost* identifying it (it still lies buried in a heap of miscellany), one doesn't treat it directly. Instead, the communicator sneaks up on it, surrounds it with a plethora of seemingly unrelated ideas which may, or may not bleed into it. Finally, one sneaks apologetically away from the tortured subject as if to guarantee confusion in identifying it and the mystery concerning the thesis or proposition intended.

It would be unfair, however, not to respond that Japanese rhetorical strategy possesses some very special qualities and nuances of its own:

> ...as opposed to the Western linear approach, they see it almost as though one were to write an idea on tissue paper and then very carefully make ink dots on the tissue around the idea. As the blots expand, merge, and interact, they completely cover every aspect of the subject and each other in much more depth and intensity than the simple Western line. Moreover, though slow, for the trained participant, the process is pleasureable—like the exploration of fine poetry for ambience, allusion, metaphor, and color—and before action everyone understands completely. (ibid., p. 27)

• **Conclusion**

As should be obvious from the above, the rhetoric that is so effective in one's own country and with one's own people may be neither useful nor comprehensible to those in other cultures. The rhetorical patterns of one language are neither better nor worse than those of any other—they are simply different. It is imperative, however, for teachers to provide their second language students with a framework for understanding the rhetorical patterns of the language they are studying in both speaking and writing, and to make them aware of the differences in logic and organization from those of their mother tongues.

The Teaching of English Presentation Skills in Japan

ESL students in many walks of life in Japan today increasingly need the ability to present their ideas clearly and effectively in English, whether they are business people

working in the international arena, scientists and other academics presenting their findings at conferences, or simply high school and university students expressing their opinions in active classroom discussions. And yet, courses specializing in the teaching of presentation skills are still relatively rare in this country, especially at secondary schools and universities.

In fact, there have been extensive demands for improvements in this area. Much has been written lately about the curriculum reform taking place at university and secondary levels in Japan (see, for example, Koike & Tanaka, 1995, pp. 13-25). Support for revisions of foreign language teaching has prevailed at many universities, and new courses called Aural Oral Communication A, B, and C have been introduced into high schools in order to enhance international communication and understanding in students. Aural Oral Communication C has been designed to provide students with speaking-centered language activities such as public speaking, discussion, and debate. In terms of teaching English presentation skills, however, many of these reforms are still at a formative stage at present, and students seeking to develop their abilities in this area are generally obliged to do so through the auspices of extra-curricular clubs.

One such club, the English Speaking Society (ESS), offers speech communication training which is of undoubted benefit for most students, particularly in enhancing their confidence and self-esteem. However, there are also serious drawbacks to this kind of approach to public speaking. Most importantly, ESS speech training exists in isolation from other club or community activities, its sole aim being participation in yearly oratorical competitions. These speech contests tend to become goals in themselves and the communication skills they engender are seldom applied to other areas of life. Secondly, advanced levels of rhetoric are often emphasized at the expense of basic patterns of language organization. Too often students do not have the necessary abilities in English to cope with these advanced styles of presentation, and many of them would benefit from a more fundamental approach. As a result, most participants require considerable help from native speakers in making extensive corrections and alterations to their speeches, and spend enormous amounts of time memorizing the results word for word. This energy could be better utilized in a different approach to public speaking.

Another organization which provides training in speech communication for adults within the community in Japan is ITC (International Training in Communication). ITC Clubs are part of an international organization with links to Toastmistress/Toastmaster Clubs throughout the world. ITC offers instruction, guidance, and practice in a wide variety of speech-related areas, such as organization techniques, thinking logically, building self-confidence, extending vocabulary, impromptus, storytelling, etc. Speech contests are also part of their agenda, but they do not exist in isolation and are closely related to other club and community activities. Many of the principles on which ITC is based could be profitably applied to academic courses throughout the country.

An Overview of Teaching Materials

The latter half of this paper will attempt to address many of the issues raised above by providing a practical and comprehensive set of materials, procedures, and techniques designed to teach students of varying backgrounds and ability levels to become effective presenters in English.[3]

The teaching materials presented here have been designed to provide all the elements necessary for a comprehensive foundation in teaching a course in English presentation skills. They come in the form of five appendices which are mostly self-explanatory in nature. These appendices are in the shape of charts or other graphic modes of presentation which have been found to be very useful in providing students with a "bird's-eye-view" of the material they will be using.[4]

• **Appendices 1a & 1b** — The Organizational Framework

The organizational framework is by far the most important component in this approach to teaching presentation skills. It provides a seven-step outline of the presentation process that can easily be applied to a variety of public speaking situations. More importantly, it permits students to order and present their ideas simply, clearly, and directly in English, and enables them to organize their language in a way that minimizes their linguistic shortcomings.

Included in this chart are a set of key expressions, both formal and informal, for each step in the speaking process, which bring a more professional tone to presentations. Students should learn this framework by heart (Appendix 1b has been supplied for this purpose), especially the key expressions which should be completely error free.

Of particular importance in this organizational schema are the outline and the summary, which are shaded in black in the chart. Outlining the main points to be presented beforehand, and summarizing these same items at the end of the presentation, are crucial steps in any form of public address, even for native speakers. For English second language speakers, who may have problems with pronunciation, grammar, and syntax, following these steps is even more important. In fact, one of the most famous maxims attributed to Toastmasters, an international organization dedicated to the development of public speaking skills, can be paraphrased as follows:

> "Before you start speaking to your audience tell them what you are going to say. After you have finished speaking, tell them what you have told them."

• **Appendix 2** — Outlining

One of the most valuable skills to inculcate in students from the outset in speech and composition courses at any level is that of outlining. Here, brainstorming sessions with

students in small groups or with the class as a whole can be used as a way of eliciting as many ideas on a subject as possible. Students then select the ideas that they think are most useful for them, organize them in a way that is appropriate to English, and set them down on paper in order to guide them in their upcoming speaking or writing activities.

During practice sessions in speech communication classes, students should only be permitted to have their outline to refer to when speaking. Although intimidating at first, this practice is an effective means of encouraging them to organize their thoughts clearly and concisely, as well as discouraging the outright reading of speeches.

There are two styles of outlining presented in this appendix: indented and spidergram. In general, spidergram outlines which are written in large print are quite useful because they result in a schema that is easy for students to follow while speaking. Appendix 2 supplies a practice exercise in both types of outlining.

• **Appendix 3** − Linking Expressions

The effective use of linking expressions, or transition signals, is an area in which students will need extensive instruction and practice. These expressions make the relationships between ideas clear in English and permit the smooth transition from one idea to the next. Moreover, transition signals act as important signposts or roadmaps in guiding the audience through a presentation, and their use is particularly important in minimizing other linguistic shortcomings. Appendix 3 provides an overview of many of the most common linking expressions found in English today.[5]

• **Appendix 4** − The Elements of Effective Delivery

A good speech is more than just the words a presenter uses. It also involves certain intangibles known as the elements of effective delivery. These include posture and stance, eye contact, gestures, facial expression, and voice. Appendix 4 contains a number of suggestions for effective speech delivery in English.[6]

• **Appendix 5** − Presentation Assessment

Feedback and assessment of student performance is normally done in two different ways. One method is for instructors to give oral feedback informally as part of mini-lessons embedded within the speech practice sessions. At this time, problem areas can be identified and discussed and suggestions for improvements can be given (see Principles & Procedures for the Classroom below).

Depending on the class size, presenters can also be videotaped and provided with a written assessment of their speeches. The presentation assessment form in Appendix 5 enables instructors to evaluate student performance and give effective written feedback in this way. It includes a chart which correlates closely with the steps outlined in the organizational framework, as well as sections for more detailed written comments on areas such as organization and content, delivery, grammar, fluency, etc. Where possible, students

should be provided with a videotape of their performance together with the completed Presentation Assessment form.

Types of Presentations

There are a number of ways of classifying presentations and these depend largely on the teaching environment, the speech goals, and the foreseeable communicative needs of the students. Types of presentations can be distinguished on the basis of modes of delivery, levels of formality, the background and communicative needs of students, and in terms of some of the basic rhetorical patterns of the English language.

• Modes of Delivery

There are generally considered to be four basic modes for delivering a speech in English: impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript, and memorized (see, for example, Payne & Prentice, 1990, pp. 38-45; Fletcher, 1973, pp. 26-29). Because each has its advantages and disadvantages, the mode of delivery that is selected should be appropriate for the particular speaking situation.

The **impromptu speech** is done with little or no advanced preparation. It is a useful classroom vehicle for teaching students to "think on their feet" and for discovering their weaknesses in organization and fluency. Topics for impromptus should usually be related to areas in which students have some special knowledge or background.

A second type of speech, but one in which participants have the opportunity to do some preparation and which is delivered from brief notes or an outline — but not by writing it out or memorizing it — is known as an **extemporaneous speech**. It is the kind of speech appropriate for most speaking situations and is the mode of delivery found most frequently. The extemporaneous presentation is the most useful of these delivery formats for classroom use.

The **manuscript speech** is given when very exact wording is required, such as in the presentation of scientific or business reports. It is written out word for word and delivered by reading the script to the audience. Because it is difficult to deliver effectively (i.e., with feeling, emphasis, and contact with the audience), it is generally not recommended for any but the most structured speaking situations, and should be avoided in classroom teaching.

Finally, when very exact wording is required, but reading from a script is inappropriate, the **memorized speech** is used. It is most often seen in such venues as oratorical competitions, presentations of high-level awards, welcomes to important visiting dignitaries, etc. The memorized speech should be discouraged in speech communication classes because it is hard to deliver with sincerity and spontaneity. Having to memorize a speech word for word is also a distraction and an inefficient use of time for second language learners who will profit more from extensive practice of the organizational patterns of the target language. Moreover, memorization of entire speeches creates the

erroneous impression that speech–making is a product in which perfection is the goal, rather than a process in which mistakes and lapses play an acceptable and necessary role.

• **Levels of Formality**

If we accept the fact that extemporaneous and impromptu presentations are the best models for use in speech communication classes, we can then make a further distinction in terms of the level of formality. Speaking formally, students stand in front of their audience and give speeches on which they have had some time to prepare, using key expressions of a more formal register. Speaking informally, they will typically sit in small discussion groups presenting information they have prepared or doing impromptus, and using a more informal set of key expressions (the organizational framework provides examples of both types of language). The former attempts to model the kind of presentation skills that are appropriate in most public speaking situations; the latter is useful in training students for active participation in small group discussion activities that can be applied to other classes.[7]

• **Student Backgrounds and Communicative Needs**

The selection of presentation patterns should also be based on the backgrounds and communicative needs of participants. Speech communication courses can take many different forms and should be designed to address a wide variety of student needs.

Business people, for example, will need extra training in business–related issues, such as presenting sales reports, describing manufacturing processes, or analyzing and comparing products. The business meeting format provides a useful model for an appropriate speaking venue for these participants.

Diplomats and other government officials will require additional exposure to the language of persuasion, argument, and debate as they prepare to express the Japanese stance on the world stage. Negotiation strategies should also be introduced at more advanced levels.

High school students will need to make shorter speeches using simpler language, and should be encouraged to talk about personal and social issues that are important in their lives. University students will find presentation skills of value in presenting research projects, in giving instructions or directions for conducting experiments, in describing physical, mechanical, or biological processes, or in simply debating the social issues of the day.

Teachers should be sensitive to their students' needs and adapt their courses accordingly, providing them with extensive practice in the clear, simple, linear presentation of their ideas in English.

• **Basic Patterns of Rhetorical Organization**

Perhaps the most effective method for choosing the types of presentations that are useful for students is to examine the basic patterns of English rhetoric. Because they

reflect the modes of reasoning that underlie the English language, they can provide a good foundation for all speech communication classes.

Traditionally, the following four categories of speaking and writing were considered to be the most important elements of English rhetoric: exposition, description, narration, and argumentation (see Mallery, 1953; Rorabacher, 1946). Expository writing and speaking are considered to be of primary importance here and can be further sub-divided into the following patterns of organization: chronological order, logical division (classification), comparison & contrast, and cause & effect (see Oshima & Hogue, 1991). These latter categories provide an effective basis for selecting the types of presentations that students should be familiar with. They are outlined below along with appropriate language patterns for each and brief suggestions for presentation topics.

1. Chronological Order

Chronological order (i.e., order by time) is a pattern of organization that is found in almost all academic fields. In chronological order presentations, transition signals (linking expressions), known as sequence language, are important:

Firstly	Beforehand	Secondly	Eventually
First of all	Previously	After this	Finally
To begin with	Earlier	Next	In the last stage
The first step is...	Prior to this	Then	The last step is...
The first stage is...		Later	...finishes with...
...begins with...	At the same time	Subsequently	...concludes with...
...starts with...	Simultaneously	In the next stage	

Source: J. Cooper, *Think and Link*, p. 5

Chronological order is mainly used in the following three types of presentation:

a. Historical events

When it is used to present historical events, chronological order describes events over a period of time, such as a biography, an autobiography, or an important occurrence in history. Sequence language is used to order the events in time.

b. Process presentations

Chronological order has an important use in scientific and technical presentations where it is used to explain physical, chemical, biological, and mechanical processes. In a chronological process speech, sequence language is used to identify the main steps or stages in the process. The language used to describe processes will typically contain many passive verb forms (e.g., The oil *is circulated* by a pump.).

c. Instructions & directions

Chronological order is also used to give directions or instructions, such as how to operate a piece of machinery, how to conduct an experiment, or even how to prepare a meal. Although it is related to process, this kind of presentation typically makes use of imperative verbs (e.g., *Pour* hot water into a bowl; *add* flour and salt.).

2. Logical Division (Classification)

Logical division or classification is another one of the most common ways to organize ideas in English. It is used to group related items together according to some quality they have in common. Logical division can be valuable when giving a presentation on a broad subject because it can be sub-divided into several smaller categories which can each then be discussed in turn (e.g., engineering as a main topic can be divided into civil, mechanical, electrical engineering, etc.). Logical division also typically makes use of sequence language, as well as the following types of expressions sometimes known as classification language:

to divide	class	...is a method of
to classify	group	...is a means of
to put into	category	...is a variety of
to fall into	type	...is an example of
to group	kind	includes...
to sort	part	is...

Source: J. Cooper, *Think and Link*, p. 25

3. Comparison & Contrast

Another useful means of organizing presentations, comparison and contrast, is found frequently in both academic work and in business. Anything can be compared or contrasted (e.g., periods of history, characters in stories, kinds of equipment, etc.) as long as they are of like nature (i.e., you can compare and contrast apples and bananas, but not apples and typewriters). This type of presentation requires the use of comparison and contrast language to make similarities and differences clear:

Categories	Concession	Contrast
In terms of	Although	In contrast
As for	Even though	Whereas
From the standpoint of	However	While
Concerning	In spite of	On the contrary
With regard to	Despite	In fact though
From the viewpoint of	Nevertheless	On the other hand

Similarities	Differences
Similarly	...is different from...
Likewise	...differs from...
...the same as...	...more ____ than...
...is similar to...	...less ____ than...
...looks like...	...is the most ____
...feels like...	...is the least ____

Some suggested topics for practicing comparison & contrast presentations are as follows: schools in your country and another country, two cities (e.g., your hometown vs Tokyo), living at home vs living away from home, public schools vs private schools, working for a company or working for the government, soccer vs baseball, wearing glasses or contact lenses, classical music vs rock'n roll, long hair or short hair, etc.

4. Cause & Effect

Cause & effect is yet another basic organizational pattern of English. In presentations using this mode of reasoning, the causes for an event or action are discussed, and then the results. The following language is useful in giving this kind of speech:

Therefore...	...because...	...the result of...
Consequently...	...since...	...the effect of...
Hence...	...as...	...the consequence of...
Thus...		...to cause...
As a result...		...to result in...
So...		...the reason for...

Social or environmental issues such as the following often make good topics for cause & effect presentations: discrimination, culture shock, pollution, stress, rising divorce rates, the graying of society, religious cults, the high cost of living, etc.

Principles & Procedures for the Classroom

Following sound pedagogical principles and procedures in the classroom can do much to ensure success in teaching English presentation skills. Those that are described below are presented as a list of practical guidelines that the author has found to be effective over many years of trial and error in this kind of teaching. They are offered in the hope that fellow teachers may find them of assistance and support in establishing and running successful courses in speech communication.

• Coursework Scheduling

At secondary and university levels in Japan, classes in speech communication skills will likely be held once a week for 90 minutes. If schools are on a semester system, a course will generally be comprised of about 15 classes. Class size is often variable, ranging up to 40 or 50 students. These parameters do not provide the teacher with a great deal of scope in providing both adequate instruction and practice time for participants.

Students need as much "hands-on" training in giving speeches as possible. As a result, class time should be reserved for this practice. Speech preparation should be done as homework as much as possible, and instruction and feedback by the teacher should take the form of short mini-lessons that can be scheduled between student speeches. Traditional teacher-centered methods in which most of the class time is devoted to lectures, and having students memorize a single speech as their course assignment, are not very effective methods in teaching this kind of subject matter.

Once the foundations for the course have been laid in the first two lessons and students have a good grasp of the organizational framework they will be using, they should expect to give a speech of five to 10 minutes duration each and every week. In this regard, it is important to emphasize to students that they should memorize the organizational

framework, but not their speeches. In addition, most of the preparation for upcoming speeches should be done as homework in the form of organizing and outlining the contents, as well as a small amount of practice in front of a mirror.

• Relationships with other Courses

An important principle in this approach to teaching presentation skills is that speech communication courses should not exist in isolation.

There should, first of all, be planning and co-ordination with the studies taking place in English composition classes because the underlying patterns of organization used in both are the same. In fact, essays that have been written in composition courses make good subject material for speeches, freeing participants to focus more on their language, organization, and delivery. Furthermore, detailed instruction in the language patterns associated with various types of presentations (e.g., sequence language, comparison & contrast language, etc.) are more easily dealt with in a writing course.

Secondly, there should be a practical application of the skills the students are learning. Speech communication, in this sense, should be seen not as a goal in itself, but rather as a way of developing organizational and communicative strategies that can be effectively applied to other areas of life. In this regard, there should be planning and coordination with other English classes in which students can use the skills they have learned by participating in group discussions, presenting research projects, debating issues of importance, etc. In this way, they will become aware that the skills they are learning are not just for the speech podium but are of real and unquestioned value in their lives.

• Classroom Management

An ideal size for teaching a class in speech communication is approximately eight to 10 students. However, since reality rarely matches this ideal, teachers often have to cope with class sizes of up to 40 or 50 students. In this kind of situation, knowledge of classroom management skills is essential for an instructor, especially in terms of time management and control over the physical classroom environment.

Of primary importance is the grouping of students. Small groups of four to six participants, separated from one another by enough space for presenting students to stand in front of their groups, is an effective way to manage large classes. In this approach one student from each group gives their speech at the same time, with all participants speaking for the same predetermined amount of time, beginning and ending together. The teacher circulates among the groups during the presentations and the other students act as the audience, preparing questions while they are listening. Since students will often change seating positions it is helpful to have everyone place excess baggage such as books, coats, etc. on the outside perimeter of the classroom at the beginning of every class in order to facilitate easy movement. Using a timer is also a helpful technique for ensuring that everyone starts and finishes on time. Presentations may take from four to six minutes at

the beginning of a course and may be as long as 10 to 15 minutes at its conclusion.

• **Classroom Atmosphere**

In a now famous survey conducted in America in the 1970s to determine what areas of life caused individuals the highest levels of stress, researchers were surprised to discover that speaking in public topped the list. We can imagine, therefore, how stressful it must be for students to be asked to speak in public in a language that is not their own, especially if they are naturally shy to begin with. The single most important feature of the successful speech communication classroom is that it be supportive and protective of students. Creating this kind of classroom atmosphere requires special efforts on behalf of the teacher. It entails protecting students emotionally when they are embarrassed and encouraging them when they are shy; it means providing feedback and criticism gently and compassionately; it involves leading the applause for each and every participant. When students feel secure and relaxed with their instructor and their peers, they will begin to achieve their own individual potentials as public speakers.

• **Classroom Instruction: Introductory & Concluding Lessons**

Before students actually begin to deliver presentations a certain amount of preparatory instruction is necessary. In the first lesson participants should be given a clear outline of course objectives and teacher expectations. Viewing speeches by former students on videotape provides an effective model at this time. During the first two lessons participants should also learn the organizational framework by heart (see Appendix 1b). Extensive pair work practice of the formal set of key expressions at this time can be useful. Initial instruction should also include training in outlining skills. Once all of these steps have been completed (normally by the third lesson) students are ready to begin presenting.

Evaluation of student performance is an appropriate way to conclude a course in public speaking. Appendix 5 provides a useful model in this regard. If possible, student presentations should be videotaped, and the videotape and assessment form supplied to participants individually as their final evaluation.

• **Classroom Instruction: Embedding Mini–lessons**

If a speech communication class is active and student–centered, participants will be presenting new material every week. They will also spend most of their class time giving presentations, listening to others present, and receiving instructions for future presentations. As one set of participants finishes their speeches and before the next set of speakers begins, the instructor should take time to provide feedback and introduce new materials or language that students need. Embedding mini–lessons in this way within an ongoing series of student presentations is an effective procedure for teaching this type of course.

In a 90 minute class of 40 students, for example, there may be eight groups of five

students presenting on a given day. With each participant delivering a five minute speech and allowing for some overlap, the teacher is left with approximately one hour in which to conduct mini-lessons, and can divide and arrange this time in any number of ways. If students give 10 minute speeches, there will be about 40 minutes left to use as embedded mini-lessons.

The kind of instruction that the teacher provides can take a variety of different forms: immediate feedback on recently concluded presentations, oral instructions or written handouts for current or upcoming assignments, advice in dealing with special areas of speech communication, or additional material for more advanced styles of presentation. The following is a brief list of possibilities:

- Presentation feedback: In giving presentation feedback, the instructor points out the main shortcomings, as well as the strengths, of recently concluded presentations. At this time it is best not to single out students individually for criticism, but is preferable to focus on problem areas in general. Praise, of course, can be judiciously directed toward individuals at any time. Emphasis on the elements of effective delivery (e.g., posture, gestures, eye contact, voice, etc.) can be useful at this time.

- Instructions and handouts: These can include explanations and additional practice exercises for different types of presentations, modes of organization, language patterns, and any other materials required in preparation for speech assignments.

- Advice for dealing with special areas: Teachers may wish to provide additional instruction and advice to help students in dealing with certain problematic areas. These could include the following:
    - question & answer sessions (see Morrisey, 1968, pp. 109–115)
    - use of audio-visual aids (see Verderber, 1988, pp. 173–183)
    - advice for a more effective delivery (see Metcalfe, 1991, pp. 245–268)
    - general "do's" & "don't's" in public speaking (see Fletcher, 1973, pp. 304–325)

- Instruction for more advanced levels of presentation: At higher levels, teachers may want to supply students with advanced instruction and materials. The following are some areas that could be considered:
    - variations on the key expressions (small group discussion sessions will usually generate a variety of other expressions which can then be verified by the instructor)
    - more creative introductions and conclusions (see Fletcher, 1973, pp. 283–334)
    - advanced formats for public speaking, especially speeches of persuasion (see Metcalfe, 1991, pp. 287–316)
    - speeches for special occasions (see Verderber, 1988, pp. 367–376; Metcalfe, 1991, pp. 317–334)

CONCLUSION

This paper began with the suggestion that the Art of Rhetoric could be a useful tool in

teaching English presentation skills. Because "rhetoric" has a wide range of meanings as well as a number of different connotations in the English language today, we briefly examined the origins of this discipline in an attempt to arrive at a clear understanding of the term. It was determined that rhetoric could be defined as the study of the organizing principles which underlie and direct our efforts towards both spoken and written expression in a language. Furthermore, we demonstrated how rhetoric is not universal, that it is very much dependent on linguistic and cultural variables, and that the interference of the rhetorical patterns of one's mother tongue often results in negative effects on one's performance in a second language. This led us to the conclusion that it is important for second language students to be made aware of the differences in the modes of reasoning and rhetorical patterns of organization between their mother tongue and the target language. Finally, it was suggested that one of the most important tasks for second language teachers today is to provide students with a clear understanding of the rhetorical patterns of the language they are studying, as well as extensive practice in actively using these patterns in both speaking and writing. The second half of this paper was an attempt to do just this, in the context of teaching English presentation skills in Japan. An organizational framework for public speaking was proposed, which exemplifies the rhetorical principles of the English language, and which can be successfully employed by second language speakers. A practical and comprehensive set of materials, procedures, and techniques for teaching students of varying backgrounds, communicative needs, and ability levels to become effective public speakers in English was presented. Finally, it is hoped that readers involved in teaching English presentation skills in Japan will find the theories, suggestions, and materials offered here of some value in conducting successful speech communication programs of their own.

Notes

1. The organizational framework for teaching presentation skills offered here and illustrated in Appendices 1a & 1b, can be easily applied to a variety of public speaking situations, guiding students in ordering and presenting their ideas simply, clearly, and directly in English. It is based on the classical rhetorical pattern of exposition.

2. In fact, Cheng (1982; cited in Hinds, 1983, p. 187), in an examination of English and Mandarin expository styles, concludes that "English writing is more aptly described by a series of concentric circles emanating from a base theme. In this conception, the more important the idea, the closer it is to the center."

3. The materials presented in this paper originated at the Language Institute of Japan (LIOJ) with the work of the author and others in the mid-1980s in immersion English programs for Japanese business professionals requiring practical communication skills for international business relations. They were further developed in workshops with corporate clientele in France, and were then applied to academic programs at the American University in Paris. At present, the author employs all of the materials, principles, and procedures outlined in this paper in courses in English rhetoric (both written and oral) and seminars in cross-cultural communication for juniors and seniors at Ehime University.

4. The charts presented in the appendices are of the author's own creation and design. Readers involved in this kind of teaching are encouraged to use this material and adapt it to their own teaching situations.

5. Detailed work with these language patterns is best dealt with in writing courses where they can be examined in more depth, and this knowledge can then easily be transferred to speech communication classes. *Think and Link* (Cooper, 1979) and *Writing Academic English* (Oshima & Hogue, 1991) are both excellent source books for those interested in more advanced study of this kind of language.

6. For a more detailed exploration of techniques for effectively delivering a speech see Dale & Wolf, 1988, pp. 8-10; and especially Metcalfe, 1991, pp. 245-268.

7. Formal and informal registers are not as highly marked in English as they are in other languages such as Japanese. As a result, non-native speakers sometimes have difficulty in distinguishing between the two. In this approach to teaching presentation skills, the key expressions are designed to clearly indicate the two levels of formality. Generally speaking, however, because spontaneity, contact with the audience, and a relaxed and friendly approach are highly valued in English, the distinction between the two levels may appear blurred at times.

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ORGANIZING INFORMATION FOR PRESENTATIONS

KEY EXPRESSIONS

FORMAL	INFORMAL
[Learn exactly by heart — no mistakes!]	[Be flexible in your choice of language!]

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.
Thank you for this opportunity to talk
with you today.
My name is ____ .
I am a ____ at ____ in ____ .
Today I would like to talk to you about...

1. Greetings
(2. Words of welcome)
3. Introduction of topic
e.g., *Good morning everyone.*
(Nice to see you all here today.)
This morning I'll be discussing...

OUTLINE

e.g., *In my opinion, there are 3 main reasons for Japan's economic success: X, Y, and Z.*
e.g., *I will be discussing this topic in terms of 2 main points of view: X and Y.*

BODY

LINKING EXPRESSIONS — SIGNPOSTS — TRANSITIONS

SUMMARY

To summarize...   *In summary ...*   *To sum up ...*

CONCLUSION

This concludes my presentation.
Thank you for your attention.
If there are any questions,
I'll be happy to answer them.

1. Signal that you have reached
the conclusion
2. Request questions
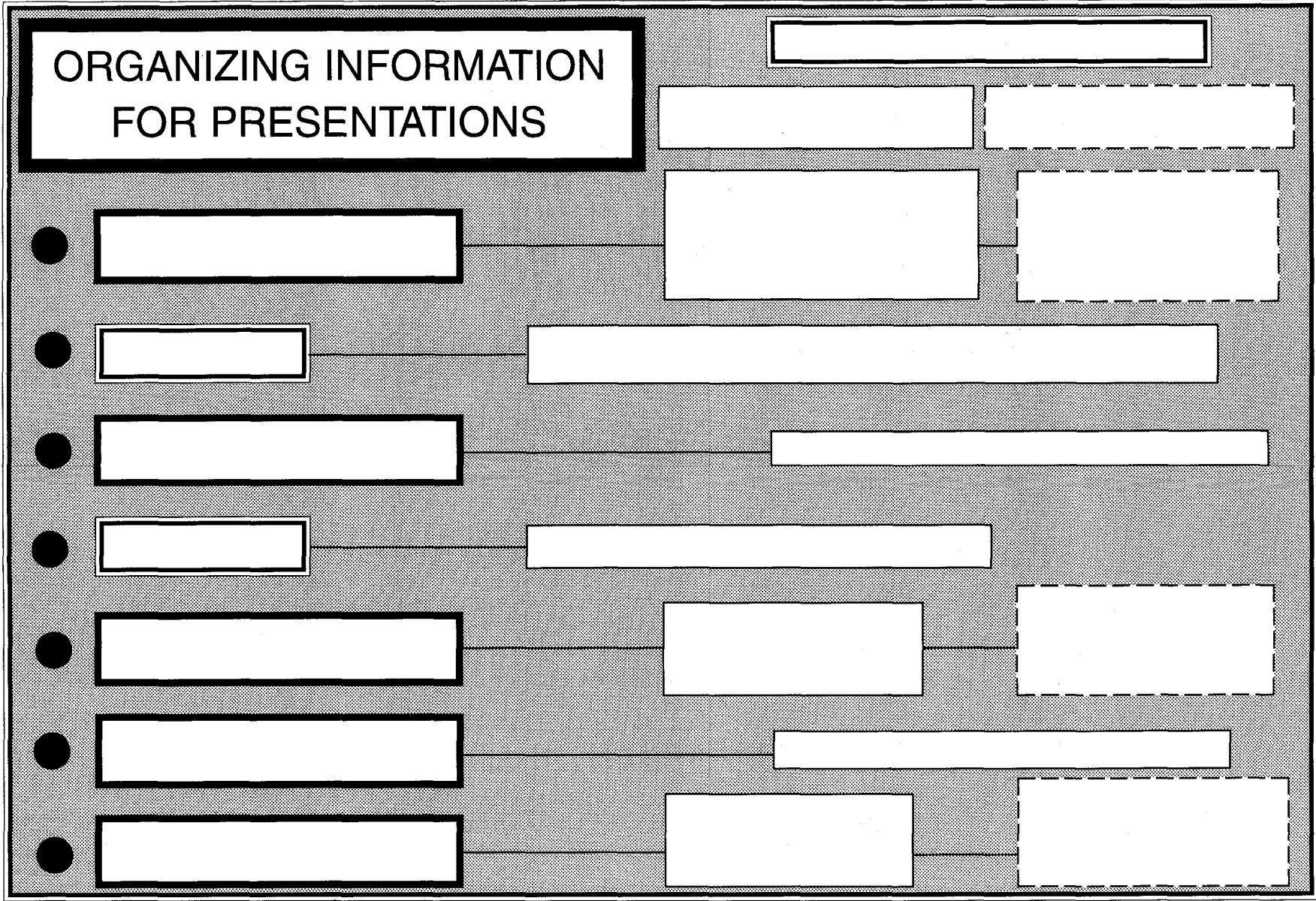e.g., *Well, I think I've covered*
everything. Any questions?

Q & A

Try to anticipate the kinds of questions you may be asked!

CLOSING

Any further questions...?
If there are no more questions,
I'll end my presentation.
Thank you.

1. Final request for questions
2. Close
3. Thanks
e.g., *Any more questions...?*
Fine, that's all for today. Thanks.

# ORGANIZING INFORMATION FOR PRESENTATIONS

Outlining

An outline is a way to plan a composition or presentation. Two of the main styles for outlining are indented and spidergram. Below is a model paragraph for which you must complete these two types of outline.

Leonardo da Vinci was one of the most versatile and accomplished individuals who ever lived. He was an artist, both a painter and a sculptor. Of his paintings, "Mona Lisa" and "The Last Supper" are perhaps the most famous. None of his sculptures survive, but there are many drawings of them. Leonardo was also an architect and helped to plan the Cathedral of Milan. He was both a military and a civil engineer. There were warplanes and tanks on Leonardo's drawing board hundreds of years before such things were actually built. Later, he became convinced that warfare was senseless and he designed ideal cities where people could live in peace. His interest in art led him to study science, and he did pioneering work in the fields of optics, anatomy, and biology. As a writer, he was known for his clear, concise prose. Furthermore, Leonardo was known as a compassionate man. It is said that he would buy caged birds in order to set them free. Leonardo, then, was truly a "Renaissance Man" — one who could do all things gracefully and well.

Spidergram Style
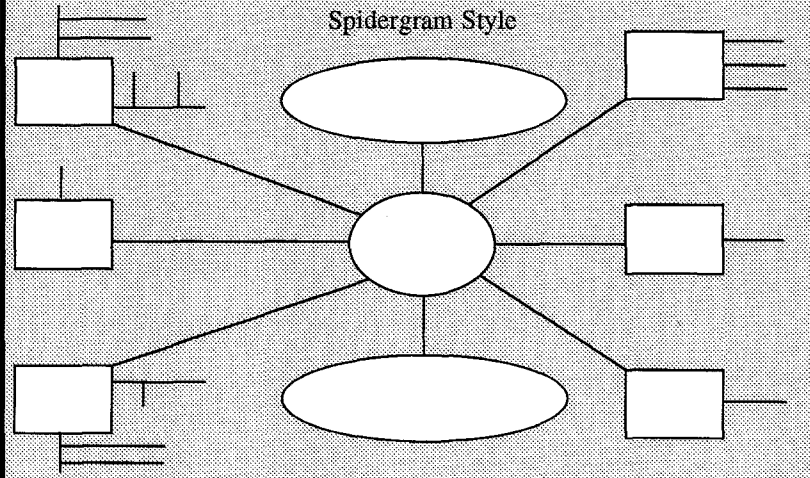
Indented Style

I. Leonardo da Vinci was one of the most versatile and accomplished individuals who ever lived.
  A. artist
    1.
      a.
      b. Last Supper
    2.
      a. no sculptures survive
      b.
  B.
    1. Cathedral of Milan
  C. engineer
    1.
      a.
      b.
    2.
      a.
  D.
    1.
    2. anatomy
    3.
  E.
    1. clear, concise prose
  F. humane and compassionate
    1.
II.

LINKING EXPRESSIONS

Categories of Information
One *factor* is . . .
Another *issue* is . . .
One more important *problem* is . . .
One of the *ways* of . . . is to . . .
One *method* of . . . is to . . .
The first *step* is . . .
The next *stage* is . . .
One *means* of . . . is . . .
Another *type* of . . . is . . .
Still another *consideration* is . . .
A further *reason* for . . . is . . .

Reference (1)
e.g., There are three main reasons for Japan's economic success: X, Y, and Z. *In terms of* X, . . .
In terms of . . .
With regard to . . .
As for . . .
From the standpoint of . . .
From the point of view of . . .
From the viewpoint of . . .
With respect to . . .
Concerning . . .
As far as X is concerned . . .

Generalization
On the whole, . . .
Generally, . . .
Overall . . .
In general, . . .
As a rule, . . .

Conclusion
In summary, . . .
Finally, . . .
In conclusion, . . .
To summarize, . . .
Thus, . . .
Therefore, . . .
To sum up, . . .
Taking the above into consideration, . . .

Results or Consequences
Therefore, . . .
Consequently, . . .
Hence, . . .
Thus, . . .
As a result, . . .
So, . . .

Concession
Although . . .
Even though . . .
Though . . .
Despite . . .
In spite of . . .
However, . . .
Nevertheless, . . .
Nonetheless, . . .
Still, . . .

Emphasis
In fact, . . .
Of course, . . .
Indeed, . . .
Certainly, . . .

Similarity
Similarly, . . .
Likewise, . . .

Elaboration
i.e., (that is) . . .
That is to say, . . .
In other words, . . .
e.g., (for example) . . .
One example is . . .
For instance, . . .
To illustrate, . . .
. . . such as . . .
An example of this is . . .
An illustration of this is . . .
This can be exemplified by . . .
illustrated by . . .
shown by . . .
demonstrated by . . .

Contrast
In contrast, . . .
Whereas . . .
While . . .
On the contrary, . . .
In fact though, . . .
However, . . .

Addition
In addition, . . .
Moreover, . . .
Furthermore, . . .
Besides, . . .
. . . also . . .
. . . as well . . .

Alternatives
In other words, . . .
Otherwise, . . .
Alternatively, . . .
On the other hand, . . .
On the one hand, . . .;
on the other, . . .

Purpose
. . . in order to . . .
. . . so as to . . .
. . . with the purpose of . . .
. . . so that . . .

Reference (2)
[In referring back to an earlier word or idea, use *this* or *these*, or sometimes *the*; avoid repeating the same words if possible.]

First Reference	*Later Reference*
The water evaporates . . .	*This* evaporation . . .
They move . . .	*These* movements . . .
There are changes . . .	*These* variations . . .
The wood is cut with an axe.	*This* method of cutting . . .

Chronological Order / Sequencing
First, / First of all, / To begin with, . . .
Beforehand, / Previously, / Prior . . .
At the same time, / Simultaneously, . . .
Secondly, / Next, / Then, / Later, . . .
Finally, / Eventually, / Lastly, . . .

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE DELIVERY

VOICE

- stand tall
- look at your listeners   • smile
- pause before you speak   • make contact with your audience

- speak at your normal speed, or even a little more slowly — never speak too quickly as it will make you appear nervous and will interfere with your clarity

BODY LANGUAGE

- pay attention to your posture — stand squarely on both feet — avoid swaying

- use gestures to emphasize and reinforce naturally — don't hide your hands

- aim for a pleasant facial expression — appear to enjoy speaking

- avoid distracting movements with hands, clothes, or papers

- vary your tone, speed, and volume — avoid speaking in a monotonous tone

- stress transition signals: e.g., first, next, in addition, another point I'd like to make, as a result, finally, in summary, etc. — these expressions act as important signposts or roadmaps

PAUSES

- use pauses effectively (e.g., when you change the topic or when you want to attract attention) — the pauses between words are often as effective as the words themselves

- pause slightly before words or sounds that you know are difficult to pronounce or that your audience may have difficulty understanding — pause again after the words — isolating them in this way will make it easier for listeners to understand

EYE CONTACT

- do not move your eyes restlessly — select different places in the audience and hold glances for two or three seconds

- avoid looking out the window or at the floor or ceiling

- try to look at everyone, not just friendly or senior faces

- use a brief outline which you can refer to from time to time — never read your speech because you will not be able to maintain eye contact with your audience

- when saying your name in English slow down slightly and leave a slight pause between your first and last names

POISE
- if you make a mistake or lose your place don't panic — simply pause, look down at your notes briefly, and begin again without making nervous noises

Teaching English Presentation Skills

PRESENTATION ASSESSMENT

SPEAKER:

TOPIC:

		Well Done	Needs to Improve
INTRODUCTION:	Greeting Thanks Self-introduction Introduction of topic		
OUTLINE			
BODY:	Organization Examples / Details Linking Expressions		
SUMMARY			
CONCLUSION:	Concludes presentation Thanks		
Q & A:	Request for questions Response to questions		
CLOSING			
DELIVERY:	Eye contact Gestures Facial expression Posture Voice		
OVERALL COMMUNICATION:	Pronunciation Grammar (accuracy) Fluency (smoothness)		

KEY EXPRESSIONS:

ORGANIZATION / CONTENT:

DELIVERY:

GRAMMAR:

FLUENCY:

GENERAL COMMENTS: