

**OTS 210 Instructional Technique  
LESSON PLAN**

**Public Presentations**

**3 Periods**

**Introduction**

As a Navy League Cadet Officer, it is expected that at some point you will have to present a lesson to a group of cadets. Consider that the main goal of a lesson is to have the cadets take knowledge and/or a skill away from it; the instructor must feel comfortable in order to pass the information correctly.

It is incumbent upon NL officers to gain as much experience as possible so that presenting a lesson becomes second nature and that the cadets' development is a priority. Feeling comfortable while presenting in public will help in this respect.

**Presenting in Public**

A great fear that many people have is presenting before a group or audience. The primary reason is that they are afraid of looking foolish in front of other people. The way to overcome this fear is through preparation, a safety net, and a positive attitude toward the audience.

Questions answered during this period:

- Why are people so afraid of public presenting?
- What are ways to overcome this fear?
- How can I apply these methods?

**Reason for fear**

The fear of presenting is rated as only second to the fear of snakes and before the fear of dying.

WHY???

What happens to many people is that--even before they start presenting--their heart starts beating faster and their mouth gets dry. Some may even get nauseous or feel like fainting.

Once the person starts talking, the heart keeps beating rapidly and the person may hear his or her voice tremble. The legs or even the whole body may start shaking. The person may also stutter or start presenting rapidly.

Although some people calm down, once they get going, others may ramble through the material incoherently.

Do you wonder why many people don't want to go through that ordeal again?

**Looking foolish**

The reason most people get anxious when required to presenting to a group is that they are afraid of looking foolish or stupid in front of many of their peers and important people.

They are afraid that their mind will go blank or that their lack of presenting skills will lower the opinion others have of them.

Being humiliated can destroy a person's ego and confidence. In fact, it can really ruin your day.

## **Steps to overcome that fear**

There are several steps of tricks to use to overcome the fear of making a mistake or looking foolish when you present to a group:

1. Be well-prepared before presenting to a group – use visual aids
2. Practice your presentation
3. Have a backup, in case you forget what you want to say
4. Relax yourself just before you present

### **1. Be well prepared**

One of the best ways to make sure you don't make foolish mistakes is to be well prepared before you present to a group. You should know what are going to talk about, who you will present to, and under what conditions you will present.

#### Leave nothing to chance

A professional in any field does not leave anything to chance before a big game, important performance, or critical presentation to corporate executives. Strategies are laid out, all material is ready, contingency plans are made, and every detail is taken care of.

When you are well prepared, chances of failure or goof-ups are greatly reduced. You feel more relaxed and sure of yourself, because you have all the bases covered.

#### Your material

You need to know exactly what you are going to talk about. This doesn't mean to memorize exactly what you plan to say. Rather, it is to have a good outline of facts and information that you can talk about. Make visual aids if you can (overheads, etc.)

#### Know audience

It is good to be aware of what type of audience you will be presenting before. This will give you an idea of the subject matter and tone of your presentation. If you are presenting before some important people or at an important event, that fact may increase your anxiety. But it is good to know up front, so that you can properly prepare for the occasion.

#### Conditions

It is good to check over the conditions under which you will present. If you can, go up to the lectern to check things over and get a feel for things. If you will use a microphone, check it out. In some situations, a person may simply make a presentation in a meeting room at work. Even then, it is a good idea to check out the room beforehand and try to visualize how you will be doing things.

### **2. Practice**

You should practice your presentation many times before you give it.

Even if you know your material very well, practice is extremely important. The more you give a talk, the more automatic it becomes, the more meat it can have, and the more confidence you have in your abilities to give the presentation.

#### Practice alone

Ways to practice alone are to first simply say the presentation out loud. This is good to get the material more ingrained in your memory.

### Use a mirror

Then say the presentation, looking into a mirror. This is good to do, because you must concentrate more. You also get an idea of how you look when presenting. Finally, if you must refer to notes, it allows you to practice eye contact with the audience.

### Stand in the corner

An interesting trick is to say your presentation while standing in the corner. The sound reflects back to you, and you can get a good idea how you sound when you present.

### Record your practice

Another way to practice is using a tape recorder. This forces you to avoid pausing to try to remember things. It also allows you to play the presentation back to study how you sound, your phrasing, and the content of the material.

### Use a friendly audience

Practice before friends. This is a very important way to practice, because it is getting closer to the "real world" of presenting to a group. Even an audience of one person is good for this type of practice.

## **3. Have a backup and aid**

It is worthwhile to bring along a "security blanket" or "safety net" in case something goes wrong in your presentation. The main thing to worry about is forgetting what you were going to say next. This can happen even if you've done extensive practicing of the presentation.

### Outline

It is good to have your presentation outlined on visual aids, and a few sheets of paper or on 3 X 5 cards. (In our case – you WILL have a lesson plan!) You can then refer to them in case you have a mental lapse. Referring to your notes is certainly acceptable to an audience, as long as you are not reading a presentation word-for-word from a script.

### Reduces anxiety

One thing that having a visual aid (or cards) provides is that it reduces your anxiety about forgetting what you were going to say or having your mind go blank. You may never even use the cards, but the fact that you have them--just in case--can greatly reduce the butterflies.

## **4. Relax before presenting**

Before you present, take three breaths to settle you down. Then when you go up to the lectern, count to 10 before you start presenting. This will allow the audience to get settled and ready to hear you. It also is a way that you are showing that you are now in control.

## **Conclusion**

Many people are afraid to present before a group or audience, because they fear looking foolish in front of other people. The way to overcome the fear of presenting to a group is to make sure you are well prepared, have some backup material ready in case you forget your lines, visualize your audience as not so important, and practice as much as you can before you present.

## **PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT**

At this point, candidates will prepare to give a 3-5 minute presentation on any topic of the instructor's choice. The topic can range from an introduction of their self to "The Art of Tying Your Shoe", as long as it gives each candidate an opportunity to present in front of a group.

Candidates should be given some preparation time for their presentation, whether it is long before they arrive to the weekend, the night before, or during the period training time. Be mindful that you may have a large number of candidates to evaluate, so consider recruiting other officer instructors to assist you.

Remind the candidates that every presentation (including instruction) should have a basic structure. Opening (introduction), body, and closing (conclusion). These are essential to any form of communication and should be used whenever you present in public. Overheads can be made with markers on transparencies.

## **EVALUATION**

This is what you are looking for and commenting on after each presentation has been completed.

An evaluation should offer two or three constructive points for improvement. It should be divided into three major sections, i.e., content, language and delivery. Use the following suggestions for each section as a guide in preparing your comments for the presenter.

### Content:

Type: Was it an informational, motivational or entertaining presentation? Did the type selected suit the presenter's topic and message?

Did it have an opening, body, and closing? Did the introduction actually introduce? Did the conclusion sum up the presentation?

### Language:

Choice of correct words – short word preferable to long, familiar to unfamiliar.

Use of questions, quotations, alliteration.

Vivid phraseology, good grammar and correct pronunciation.

Avoid jargon, clichés, and off-colour remarks.

Delivery: (stance, gestures, eye contact, voice projection.)

### Gestures:

Gestures should relate effectively to presentation. Make firm clear movements. Avoid meaningless mechanical movements. Smile...facial expression should change to express meaning. Eliminate distracting mannerisms. Avoid clasping hands, rocking, moving about aimlessly, gripping lectern or playing with notes.

Eye contact is essential. Look at individuals in different parts of the room. Too much reference to notes is distracting for the audience.

### Voice Projection:

Pitch: Relax throat – ascertain normal pitch – avoid monotony.

Pace: Normal pace 160-170 words per minute – slow down for emphasis – speed up for variety. Pauses for punctuation. Dramatic pause very effective before and after important statement of punch line.

Quality: confidence, enthusiasm and friendliness. Vary pitch, pace and power maintaining quality and articulation. Lean toward audience...speak softly, slowly and clearly, then increase power, pace and inflection dramatically.