



## EFFECTIVE SPEAKING

As a student, it is very easy to focus on listening, reading and writing and to neglect your speaking skills. The best way to learn at university, however, is to be actively engaged in your subject. This means forming your own opinions and sharing them with fellow students and lecturers. Good, confident speaking is essential to this so take every opportunity to speak.

	What you need to know.....
1. <b>Fluency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not force yourself to speak quickly. Clarity is more important than speed and your speaking will naturally become faster over time.</li><li>• Fit your pace of speech to the complexity of the topic. If something is more difficult or complicated, slowing down is not a problem.</li><li>• Try not to speak too quietly or too loudly, even if you feel nervous. Moderate volume is best.</li></ul>
2. <b>Mistakes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not be afraid of mistakes – everyone makes them!</li><li>• If you do make a mistake, it is fine to correct yourself. Remember, this is something everyone does.</li></ul>
3. <b>Misunderstandings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not see a bit of confusion as a disaster. Take a breath and try again. You could use different words or try to create a context for your listener to help their comprehension.</li><li>• Accept the fact that some misunderstandings will cause laughter. Do not let this embarrass you. If people laugh, they will usually want to laugh with you, not at you. Try to see the humour and join in rather than feeling embarrassed.</li></ul>
4. <b>Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take every opportunity you can to participate in conversations with a variety of people. There is usually time for a brief chat before or after lectures and tutorials.</li><li>• Remember that you do not have to always talk about what you are studying. Talking about anything from politics to Pokémon Go is also good practice!</li></ul>

<p>5. <b>Body language</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember that a lot of communication is non-verbal. If you focus too much on the words you are saying and stop giving the physical clues of gesture, body language and facial expression you will make yourself harder to understand.</li> <li>Likewise, it is also important to notice what the person you are listening do is doing, as well as what they are saying.</li> </ul>
<p>6. <b>Patience</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay positive! Your confidence will develop over time.</li> <li>Have realistic expectations of yourself and your rate of progress. It is not possible to become a great speaker overnight.</li> <li>If you are not a native speaker, remember that you will need to give yourself time to learn to work your facial muscles in new ways to speak English. This will come with practice.</li> </ul>
<p>7. <b>Presentations and public speaking</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try not to mumble. Replacing 'um's and 'ah's with pauses and breaths will help you to hold your audience's attention.</li> <li>Be yourself rather than copying anyone else's speaking style.</li> <li>Record yourself and listen to how you sound. Pick two or three things to concentrate on improving.</li> </ul>
<p>8. <b>Communication styles and cultural context</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If English is not your first language, or you are new to Australia, pay attention to common small talk topics. Try starting conversations on these topics yourself.</li> <li>If other students use a lecturer's first name and ask them direct questions, it is OK for you to do the same.</li> </ul>

### Useful links

- **Free English speaking online course**

<https://www.edx.org/course/conversational-english-skills-tsinghuax-30640014x-1>

- **Presentations and public speaking**

<http://blog.ted.com/a-ted-speaker-coach-shares-11-tips-for-right-before-you-go-on-stage/>