

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, presentation skills have become a cornerstone of academic and professional success, especially in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. For students pursuing STEM subjects, effectively communicating complex ideas is just as crucial as mastering the technical content. Whether sharing research findings at conferences, pitching innovative solutions to stakeholders, or collaborating with international teams, strong presentation skills enable individuals to make an impact in their field. This is particularly true for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, who must navigate the dual challenge of conveying intricate technical information while managing language barriers.

Table of Contents



- [Introduction](#)
- [The Importance of Presentation Skills in STEM](#)
- [Key Components of Effective STEM Presentations for EFL Students](#)
- [Tailoring STEM Presentation Skills to EFL Learners' Needs](#)
- [Teaching Strategies for Improving EFL Students' Presentation Skills](#)
- [Overcoming Challenges in Teaching STEM Presentation Skills](#)
- [Conclusion](#)

The Importance of Presentation Skills for EFL Students in STEM

For [EFL students](#), mastering presentation skills in English can be transformative. In STEM, where data-driven explanations and technical details dominate, clear [communication](#) helps not only in explaining complex concepts but also in establishing credibility within academic and professional communities. Effective [presentations](#) provide an opportunity to build respect for one's expertise and make scientific contributions accessible to a broader audience. Furthermore, presentation skills enhance career prospects, enabling EFL students to stand out in global job markets where English is often the primary medium of communication.

In many ways, presenting in a second language introduces additional layers of complexity for STEM students. It requires a delicate balance between delivering precise technical information and ensuring that it is accessible to an audience with varying levels of expertise. Additionally, these students must overcome linguistic challenges such as [pronunciation](#) difficulties, limited vocabulary, and the confidence needed to engage listeners. The ability to navigate these difficulties while maintaining clarity and professionalism is key to their success.

Challenges Faced by EFL Students in STEM Presentations

EFL students in STEM fields often face a unique set of challenges when preparing and delivering presentations. One significant barrier is the technical nature of the content itself. STEM subjects rely heavily on specialized terminology, complex processes, and data analysis, making it difficult for

EFL students to explain these concepts fluently. Many EFL students may struggle with understanding and using academic vocabulary, leading to confusion or miscommunication.

Moreover, cultural differences in communication styles can also influence how EFL students approach their presentations. In some cultures, the format or delivery of a presentation may differ significantly from what is expected in English-speaking academic environments. For example, varying levels of formality, respect for authority, and audience engagement may shape how students feel comfortable presenting. Overcoming these cultural barriers is crucial for building confidence and ensuring [effective communication](#).

Another challenge lies in [public speaking anxiety](#), which can be heightened for EFL students. Presenting in a non-native language adds a layer of self-consciousness and fear of making mistakes, potentially affecting delivery and coherence. Even students with strong technical knowledge might find it hard to convey their ideas clearly if they are worried about their [language skills](#).

This article aims to explore effective ways to teach presentation skills to EFL students in STEM subjects. By focusing on the unique needs of these students, we will examine methods to enhance both their [language proficiency](#) and their ability to deliver clear, organized, and engaging presentations. The article will provide English teachers and professionals in the education field with practical strategies to help EFL students overcome the linguistic and technical challenges of STEM presentations.

The Importance of Presentation Skills in STEM

Presentation skills are essential for students pursuing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. In these fields, professionals are often required to convey complex ideas to a range of audiences, from peers in academia to stakeholders in industry. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, mastering these skills can be even more challenging due to language barriers, but it is no less crucial. In this section, we will explore the reasons why STEM students need strong presentation skills and examine the common communication barriers that EFL students face in this context.

Why STEM Students Need Effective Presentation Skills

Effective communication lies at the heart of STEM disciplines. Whether explaining scientific research, presenting technical data, or proposing solutions to complex problems, the ability to communicate clearly is essential. STEM professionals are not only expected to be experts in their field but also to be able to explain their ideas to both technical and non-technical audiences. This makes presentation skills a critical part of their academic and professional development.

One reason presentation skills are so important in STEM is the increasing interdisciplinary nature of the field. Scientists and engineers must often collaborate with professionals from different disciplines and backgrounds, making it essential to communicate ideas in a way that is understandable and respectful to all participants (Lowe, 2016). For example, a researcher presenting a new scientific discovery must explain their findings in a clear and structured manner so that the audience, which may include policymakers, investors, and fellow researchers, can fully

grasp the significance of the work. This requires not only technical knowledge but also the ability to simplify complex information without losing accuracy.

In addition, the academic environment demands that students and professionals present their work regularly. Conferences, seminars, and thesis defenses all require the ability to organize thoughts, present them logically, and respond to questions. This process is not just about transferring knowledge but also about building respect for the presenter's expertise and research. Clear and respectful communication allows STEM professionals to build relationships, secure funding, and contribute to global conversations on science and technology (Thompson, 2020).

The role of presentation skills extends beyond academia into professional life. Many STEM careers involve presenting ideas to clients, colleagues, or the general public. For example, engineers may need to explain technical solutions to non-engineers, or scientists might have to present their research findings to a funding body. In these situations, clear communication ensures that everyone involved can understand and appreciate the significance of the work. Presentation skills are not just an added benefit; they are a fundamental part of a successful STEM career.

STEM professionals need clear communication skills to present complex ideas effectively.

Common Communication Barriers for EFL STEM Students

EFL students studying STEM face unique communication barriers that can affect their ability to deliver effective presentations. One of the most significant challenges is language proficiency, particularly when it comes to technical vocabulary. STEM subjects often require students to use highly specialized terms and complex concepts, which can be difficult even for native speakers. For EFL students, the challenge is twofold: they must not only understand and use these terms correctly but also ensure that their audience can follow along.

Language proficiency in technical subjects can be especially daunting because it involves both academic language and subject-specific jargon (Leki, 2018). For instance, a student presenting a project on environmental engineering might need to use terms like “hydraulic conductivity” or “bioremediation,” which are essential to their field but may not be familiar to a general audience. EFL students might struggle with the pronunciation, usage, or even the understanding of these terms, leading to confusion or misunderstandings during their presentations. This language barrier can result in a lack of clarity, which undermines the effectiveness of the presentation and diminishes the student’s confidence.

Cultural differences in communication norms also pose challenges for EFL students in STEM presentations. In many cases, the way ideas are structured and presented varies significantly across cultures. For example, in some cultures, presentations might focus more on providing a comprehensive overview, while in others, a more direct and concise approach is preferred (Hyland, 2009). EFL students may find it difficult to adapt to these expectations, particularly if they come from educational backgrounds where different presentation styles are the norm.

One cultural factor that can significantly impact presentation delivery is the level of formality expected in academic settings. In some cultures, students are taught to be highly formal and deferential during presentations, which can sometimes come across as overly rigid or impersonal in English-speaking academic environments. Conversely, in more informal settings, students might struggle with balancing respect for the audience and the need for professional language, leading to presentations that either lack authority or feel too casual (Galloway, 2019). Navigating these cultural expectations requires both language proficiency and an understanding of the norms and values of the target audience.

Moreover, EFL students may encounter difficulties with audience engagement. In many STEM presentations, particularly in Western academic contexts, presenters are expected to engage the audience by asking questions, encouraging discussion, and responding to feedback. However, in some cultures, presentations are more lecture-oriented, with little to no interaction between the presenter and the audience (Brown & Levinson, 2017). EFL students unfamiliar with this more interactive style of presentation may struggle to adapt, leading to presentations that seem disconnected or unengaging.

Addressing these communication barriers requires a targeted approach. Educators must be aware of the specific challenges EFL students face when presenting in a STEM context and offer strategies to help them overcome these hurdles. This can include providing support in developing technical vocabulary, helping students understand cultural expectations, and offering opportunities for practice and feedback. By recognizing and addressing these challenges, teachers can ensure that EFL students are not only competent in their technical knowledge

Key Components of Effective STEM Presentations for EFL Students

Delivering a successful presentation in a STEM field requires not only mastery of the content but also the ability to structure information in a clear and engaging way. For English as a Foreign

Language (EFL) students, mastering the art of presentation involves focusing on several key components: structure, the use of visual aids, and delivery techniques. These elements help ensure that the message is conveyed effectively, regardless of the students' language proficiency. In this section, we will explore how EFL students can develop a well-structured STEM presentation, the importance of visual aids, and the essential delivery techniques they need to engage and respect their audience.

Structuring a STEM Presentation

The foundation of any effective presentation is its structure. A clear, logical structure helps the audience follow the speaker's argument and ensures that the most important points are emphasized. For EFL students, a well-organized presentation can make it easier to communicate complex technical information and manage language challenges.

Developing a Clear Introduction, Body, and Conclusion

The structure of a typical STEM presentation follows a familiar pattern: introduction, body, and conclusion. In the introduction, the presenter should clearly outline the purpose of the presentation, introduce the main topic, and briefly explain the structure of the talk (Hughes & Lavery, 2020). This gives the audience a roadmap of what to expect and sets the tone for the presentation. EFL students should aim for simplicity and clarity in the introduction, avoiding overly complex language or technical terms unless they are essential.

The body of the presentation is where the majority of the content is delivered. In STEM presentations, this usually involves discussing research findings, explaining technical processes, or outlining proposed solutions to scientific problems. To keep the audience engaged, it is important to break the information into clear, manageable sections, with each section building on the previous one. EFL students can benefit from using transitional phrases to guide the audience from one point to the next, such as "first," "next," or "as a result" (Williams & Thompson, 2018). This helps create a logical flow and reduces the risk of the audience becoming confused or lost.

The conclusion should summarize the key points of the presentation and reinforce the main message. For EFL students, this is an opportunity to restate their findings in simpler terms, ensuring that the audience has understood the core argument. A strong conclusion leaves the audience with a clear understanding of the topic and can include a call to action or suggestions for further research (Galloway, 2019).

Effective **STEM** presentations require clear structure, visual aids, and **confident delivery**.

Outlining the Scientific Method, Research Findings, and Solutions

STEM presentations often involve discussing research, experiments, or technical projects. For EFL students, it is important to outline the scientific method or process in a clear and structured way. This might involve explaining the research question, hypothesis, methodology, results, and conclusion in a logical sequence (Thompson, 2020). By breaking the process down into these steps, students can make complex technical information more accessible to their audience.

In addition to discussing the scientific process, it is important to present research findings clearly. This can be challenging for EFL students who may struggle with technical vocabulary or complex data. One strategy is to simplify the language used to explain results while maintaining accuracy. For example, instead of using overly technical jargon, students can explain concepts in more general terms before introducing the specific terminology. This ensures that both technical and non-technical members of the audience can follow the presentation (Lowe, 2016).

The Role of Visual Aids

Visual aids play a critical role in STEM presentations, especially for EFL students who may find it difficult to explain technical concepts verbally. Charts, graphs, and other visual elements can help bridge language gaps by providing a visual representation of complex ideas. In addition, visual aids can enhance understanding by making abstract concepts more concrete and easier to grasp.

Using Charts, Graphs, and Technical Illustrations to Support Explanations

In STEM fields, data is often presented in the form of charts, graphs, or technical illustrations. These visuals can help clarify complex information and make it more digestible for the audience. For EFL

students, using visual aids can reduce the amount of verbal explanation required, making it easier to communicate complex ideas (Hyland, 2009). For example, a graph showing the results of an experiment can convey patterns or trends more effectively than a verbal explanation alone. By using visual elements, students can ensure that their audience understands the key points without being overwhelmed by technical language.

Visual aids should be used strategically to complement the spoken presentation. EFL students should aim to keep their visuals simple and uncluttered, focusing on one key idea per visual (Williams & Thompson, 2018). Overloading a slide with too much information can confuse the audience and detract from the main message. Additionally, it is important for students to explain the visual aids as they present them, rather than assuming that the audience will understand them without guidance.

How Visual Elements Can Help Overcome Language Barriers

For EFL students, visual aids can be particularly helpful in [overcoming language barriers](#). Visual elements such as diagrams, flowcharts, and illustrations can provide additional context that helps the audience understand the technical content, even if the speaker's verbal explanation is not entirely clear (Lowe, 2016). For example, in a presentation on electrical engineering, a diagram showing the components of a circuit can help the audience visualize how the circuit works, even if the EFL student struggles to explain it in detail.

Moreover, visual aids can reinforce the key points of the presentation and provide the audience with a reference point to follow along with the speaker. This is especially important in STEM presentations, where complex processes and data analysis are often central to the topic. By providing visual representations of these concepts, EFL students can ensure that their audience remains engaged and better understands the technical content.

Delivery Techniques

The way a presentation is delivered can significantly affect how well the audience understands and responds to the information. For EFL students, mastering delivery techniques such as body language, voice modulation, and pacing can help compensate for any linguistic challenges and ensure that the presentation is respectful and engaging.

Body Language, Voice Modulation, and Pace

Non-verbal communication is a key component of any presentation. For EFL students, using appropriate body language can help convey confidence and professionalism. Gestures, facial expressions, and posture can all play a role in reinforcing the message and keeping the audience engaged (Galloway, 2019). For example, making eye contact with the audience helps establish a connection and shows respect for the listeners. Similarly, gestures can be used to emphasize key points or illustrate certain concepts.

Voice modulation is another important aspect of effective delivery. Speaking in a monotone can cause the audience to lose interest while varying the pitch, tone, and volume of the voice can help maintain engagement and emphasize key points. For EFL students, practicing voice modulation can

also help reduce anxiety by giving them more control over their delivery (Brown & Levinson, 2017). Pacing is equally important; speaking too quickly can overwhelm the audience while speaking too slowly can lead to disengagement. Finding a balanced pace ensures that the audience can follow along without becoming confused or bored.

Overcoming Anxiety and Maintaining Respect for the Audience

Public speaking anxiety is common among EFL students, particularly when presenting in a second language. This anxiety can manifest in a variety of ways, including nervous gestures, a shaky voice, or difficulty maintaining focus. However, with practice and preparation, students can learn to manage their anxiety and deliver a respectful, confident presentation.

One effective strategy for overcoming anxiety is practicing the presentation multiple times before delivering it to a live audience. This allows EFL students to become more familiar with the content and delivery, reducing the likelihood of mistakes (Thompson, 2020). Additionally, focusing on maintaining respect for the audience—through clear communication, eye contact, and engagement—can help students build confidence and reduce nervousness.

Tailoring STEM Presentation Skills to EFL Learners' Needs

To effectively teach presentation skills to EFL students in STEM, educators must take into account the specific language challenges these learners face. EFL students often struggle with understanding and communicating technical content, and the ability to present this information clearly is key to their academic and professional success. Tailoring instruction to address their unique needs involves focusing on language proficiency, creating practice opportunities, and understanding the cultural nuances of communication. This section will explore how simplifying technical jargon, fostering peer feedback, and promoting cultural sensitivity can enhance EFL learners' ability to deliver STEM presentations confidently and respectfully.

Addressing Language Proficiency Challenges

Language proficiency is often one of the most significant hurdles for EFL students in STEM fields. The technical language and jargon associated with these subjects can be difficult for native speakers, let alone students who are learning in a second language. For [EFL learners](#), simplifying technical vocabulary and building a robust STEM-specific lexicon are essential steps toward improving their presentation skills.

Simplifying Technical Jargon for Clarity

STEM subjects are notorious for their specialized terminology, which can be daunting for EFL students to grasp and use effectively in presentations. Technical jargon often involves abstract concepts, complex theories, and terms that do not have direct translations in the students' native languages (Thompson, 2020). Simplifying this jargon without losing the core meaning is an important skill for EFL students to develop, as it allows them to communicate clearly while maintaining the technical accuracy of their content.

One approach to simplifying technical terms is to encourage students to explain complex concepts in layman's terms before introducing the more specialized vocabulary. For instance, when discussing a topic like "biotechnology," a student could first explain that it involves using living organisms to develop products, before delving into terms like "genetic engineering" or "bioinformatics" (Lowe, 2016). This method not only helps the student to structure their presentation logically but also ensures that their audience, who may not be familiar with the technical jargon, can follow along.

Additionally, instructors can provide students with glossaries or lists of essential technical terms and encourage them to practice using these words in various contexts (Hyland, 2009). By gradually building familiarity with the most common terminology in their field, EFL students can improve both their [comprehension](#) and their ability to explain complex concepts during presentations.

EFL learners need simplified jargon, peer feedback, and cultural sensitivity training.

Building Vocabulary in STEM Fields for EFL Students

Beyond simplifying jargon, EFL students need to actively build their vocabulary in the specific context of STEM subjects. A strong technical vocabulary allows students to present their ideas with precision and clarity, which is essential for effective communication in both academic and professional settings (Hughes & Lavery, 2020). Educators can support this process by integrating targeted vocabulary-building exercises into their STEM courses.

One strategy is to focus on commonly used words and phrases in scientific writing and presentations, such as terms related to processes, results, and conclusions. For example, words like "analyze," "hypothesize," and "demonstrate" are frequently used in STEM presentations and are critical for students to understand and use effectively (Williams & Thompson, 2018). Incorporating these terms into class activities, such as research summaries or mini-presentations, can help EFL students become more comfortable with the language of STEM.

Furthermore, encouraging students to engage with English-language research articles, textbooks, and presentations in their field can help them see how technical vocabulary is used in context (Lowe, 2016). This exposure not only enhances their vocabulary but also improves their understanding of how ideas are structured and communicated in STEM disciplines.

Encouraging Practice Through Peer Feedback

Practice is essential to mastering any skill, and presentation skills are no exception. For EFL students, regular practice with peers can provide valuable feedback, boost confidence, and help students refine their language and delivery. Peer review and group practice sessions allow students to develop their presentation skills in a respectful and supportive environment, which can lead to significant improvements over time.

Peer Review as a Respectful and Constructive Tool

Peer review is a powerful tool for improving presentation skills, as it provides students with feedback from individuals who are at a similar level of language proficiency and technical knowledge. When conducted respectfully and constructively, peer review allows EFL students to identify areas for improvement in both content and delivery without the pressure of a formal evaluation (Hyland, 2009). Instructors can guide students on how to give constructive feedback by focusing on specific aspects of the presentation, such as clarity of explanation, use of visual aids, and engagement with the audience.

Encouraging students to frame their feedback respectfully—focusing on what was done well and offering suggestions for improvement—fosters a supportive learning environment (Galloway, 2019). For example, a peer might comment on the effectiveness of the visual aids used while suggesting that the presenter speak more slowly or clarify certain terms. This type of feedback not only helps the presenter improve but also reinforces the peer reviewer's own understanding of the material.

Developing Confidence Through Group Activities and Practice Sessions

EFL students often experience anxiety when presenting in front of an audience, particularly in a second language. Group practice sessions can help reduce this anxiety by providing a safe and familiar environment for students to rehearse their presentations (Lowe, 2016). These sessions allow students to become more comfortable speaking in front of others, gradually building their confidence and improving their ability to present technical information clearly.

During group activities, students can take turns delivering parts of a presentation, offering feedback to one another, and working collaboratively to improve their language and presentation skills. This interactive approach not only promotes peer learning but also helps students feel more supported and respected by their classmates, which can boost their confidence when presenting to a larger audience (Brown & Levinson, 2017).

Cultural Sensitivity in STEM Presentations

Cultural factors play a significant role in how students approach presentations. Different academic environments have distinct expectations regarding formality, audience interaction, and presentation

style, and these differences can impact how EFL students prepare and deliver their presentations. Understanding and respecting these cultural norms is crucial for helping EFL students succeed in STEM presentations.

Respecting Various Academic Environments

STEM students often come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, each with its own norms regarding communication and academic presentations. In some cultures, presentations are highly formal, with little to no interaction between the speaker and the audience. In others, presentations may be more informal, with a greater emphasis on audience participation and discussion (Galloway, 2019). EFL students may find it challenging to adapt to the expectations of a new academic environment, particularly when these norms differ from those in their home country.

Instructors can help students navigate these cultural differences by explaining the expectations for presentations in English-speaking academic environments and offering strategies for adapting their style accordingly. For example, students may need guidance on how to engage the audience, when to invite questions, and how to handle interruptions or feedback respectfully (Brown & Levinson, 2017). By providing this cultural context, educators can ensure that EFL students are better prepared to meet the expectations of their audience and communicate their ideas effectively.

Understanding Different Expectations for Audience Interaction

In many Western academic environments, audience interaction is seen as a key component of a successful presentation. Presenters are often expected to engage the audience through questions, discussion, and eye contact, while audiences are encouraged to ask questions or offer feedback throughout the presentation (Hyland, 2009). For EFL students, this interactive style of presenting may be unfamiliar, particularly if they come from academic cultures where presentations are more lecture-oriented and audience interaction is limited.

Educators can help EFL students develop the skills needed for interactive presentations by incorporating audience engagement techniques into their lessons. For example, students can be taught how to pose questions to the audience, respond to feedback respectfully, and use body language to connect with their listeners (Williams & Thompson, 2018). These skills not only improve the quality of the presentation but also help EFL students build confidence in managing interactions with their audience.

Teaching Strategies for Improving EFL Students' Presentation Skills

Teaching presentation skills to EFL students in STEM subjects requires a carefully designed curriculum that addresses both language proficiency and technical content. Additionally, integrating technology and providing respectful, constructive feedback can significantly enhance students' ability to present confidently and effectively. In this section, we will explore various strategies that educators can use to improve EFL students' presentation skills, including curriculum design, the role of technology, and methods for offering feedback.

Creating an Effective Curriculum for STEM Presentations

For EFL students to develop strong presentation skills, educators must incorporate these skills into the [STEM curriculum](#) in a structured and deliberate way. Balancing the technical demands of STEM content with [language development](#) is essential to ensure that students are equipped to present complex ideas clearly and confidently.

Incorporating Presentation Skills into STEM Courses for EFL Students

Incorporating presentation skills into STEM courses helps students develop the communication abilities necessary to share their knowledge with others. A well-designed curriculum should introduce presentation techniques early and provide opportunities for students to practice these skills regularly throughout the course (Thompson, 2020). This ensures that students are not only learning the technical content of their field but also how to communicate it effectively.

For EFL students, integrating language support into these lessons is crucial. Instructors can start by teaching the basic structure of a STEM presentation—introduction, body, and conclusion—before moving on to more advanced skills, such as using visual aids and engaging the audience (Lowe, 2016). By gradually increasing the complexity of the presentations, students can build confidence and refine their skills over time.

One approach is to assign students mini-presentations on specific STEM topics throughout the course, giving them multiple opportunities to practice and receive feedback. These presentations could focus on different aspects of scientific communication, such as explaining research methods, presenting findings, or defending a hypothesis. This regular practice helps students become more comfortable with both the content and the language of STEM presentations.

A balanced curriculum, technology, and constructive feedback enhance presentation skills.

Balancing Language Development with Technical Content

Balancing language development with the technical demands of STEM subjects is essential when [teaching EFL students](#). Instructors should recognize that students need to improve their [English proficiency](#) while also mastering complex scientific concepts (Hyland, 2009). To achieve this balance, educators can adopt a dual-focus approach, where both language and technical content are addressed in each lesson.

For example, when teaching a lesson on data analysis in a STEM course, the instructor can simultaneously focus on the language needed to describe data trends, such as terms like “increase,” “decrease,” “correlation,” or “variance” (Williams & Thompson, 2018). This approach ensures that students are learning the technical content while also expanding their English vocabulary, and improving their ability to explain their findings in a clear and professional manner.

Using Technology to Enhance Learning

Technology plays a critical role in modern education, and it can be particularly beneficial for improving presentation skills. Digital platforms and interactive tools allow students to practice their presentations in a low-pressure environment and receive feedback on both content and delivery.

Role of Digital Platforms for Practicing Presentations

Digital platforms provide EFL students with an excellent opportunity to practice their presentations and improve their performance. Video recording tools, for example, allow students to record their presentations, review their performance, and identify areas for improvement (Galloway, 2019). This [self-assessment](#) can be especially useful for EFL students who may struggle with pronunciation, pacing, or body language. By watching their recorded presentations, students can become more aware of these issues and work to improve them before delivering their presentations to a live audience.

In addition to self-assessment, recorded presentations can be shared with peers or instructors for feedback. This allows students to receive constructive criticism in a supportive environment, helping them to refine their language and presentation techniques. Platforms such as Zoom, and Google Meet, or specialized educational tools like Flipgrid can facilitate this process, enabling students to practice from anywhere and receive feedback remotely (Thompson, 2020).

Interactive Tools to Foster [Active Learning](#)

Interactive tools such as presentation software, polling apps, and virtual whiteboards can help engage EFL students and foster active learning. These tools allow students to create more dynamic presentations, incorporating visual aids, interactive elements, and audience engagement techniques (Lowe, 2016). For example, tools like PowerPoint, Prezi, or Canva allow students to design professional-looking slides that enhance their presentation, making complex information more accessible to the audience.

In addition, polling apps like Mentimeter or Kahoot can be used during presentations to engage the audience and encourage interaction. This is particularly useful for EFL students, who may find it

challenging to keep the audience engaged while focusing on their language skills. By using these tools, students can create a more interactive and engaging presentation that maintains the audience's attention and reinforces key points (Williams & Thompson, 2018).

Providing Respectful and Constructive Feedback

Feedback is an essential part of learning and improving presentation skills, particularly for EFL students. However, the way feedback is delivered can significantly impact a student's confidence and motivation. Providing respectful, constructive feedback that focuses on both content and language is key to helping students improve without discouraging them.

Approaches to Giving Feedback on Content and Language

When giving feedback on EFL students' presentations, it is important to address both the content of the presentation and the student's language use. Feedback on content should focus on the clarity, organization, and depth of the information presented. For example, instructors might comment on how well the student explained a scientific concept or whether the visual aids were used effectively to support the presentation (Hughes & Lavery, 2020).

In terms of language, feedback should address grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary usage, but it should be given in a way that does not overwhelm the student. For instance, instead of pointing out every minor error, instructors can focus on the most significant issues that affect comprehension or clarity. This ensures that the feedback is manageable and actionable, allowing the student to focus on improving key areas (Galloway, 2019).

The Importance of Ongoing Assessment and Respectful Support

Ongoing assessment and support are crucial for helping EFL students improve their presentation skills over time. Rather than providing feedback only after a final presentation, instructors should offer continuous guidance throughout the course, allowing students to make gradual improvements. This approach not only builds confidence but also ensures that students feel supported and respected in their learning journey (Brown & Levinson, 2017).

By offering regular feedback and opportunities for revision, educators can help students refine their presentations, improve their language skills, and develop the confidence needed to succeed in both academic and professional settings. Additionally, creating a classroom culture of respect, where students feel comfortable making mistakes and learning from them, is essential for fostering growth and improvement.

Overcoming Challenges in Teaching STEM Presentation Skills

Teaching STEM presentation skills to EFL students involves addressing specific challenges that can hinder their progress. Two of the most significant obstacles are fear of public speaking and time management during presentations. These challenges can affect a student's ability to communicate effectively, and overcoming them requires targeted strategies. This section will explore how to

address the psychological barriers related to public speaking anxiety and techniques for managing time during presentations.

Addressing Fear of Public Speaking in EFL Students

Public speaking anxiety is one of the most common challenges faced by students, and this fear can be even more pronounced for EFL learners. The pressure of speaking in front of an audience, combined with the added difficulty of doing so in a second language, often leads to heightened anxiety. This anxiety can negatively impact both the content and delivery of a presentation, making it essential for educators to help students manage these fears effectively.

Psychological Barriers and Their Impact on Presentation Performance

Fear of public speaking, also known as glossophobia, is a common issue that affects many students. For EFL learners, the anxiety is often intensified by concerns about language proficiency, pronunciation, and making mistakes in front of peers or instructors (Thompson, 2020). Psychological barriers such as self-consciousness, fear of judgment, and fear of failure can cause students to stumble over their words, lose focus, or rush through their presentations, leading to a loss of clarity and confidence.

EFL students may also worry about how their accents, grammar, or vocabulary will be perceived, which can cause them to avoid eye contact, speak too quickly, or use overly simplistic language to avoid mistakes (Lowe, 2016). These behaviors can detract from the overall quality of the presentation, making it difficult for the audience to follow the content and engage with the speaker.

**Address public speaking anxiety
and time management for effective
presentations.**

Techniques to Boost Confidence and Manage Anxiety

To help EFL students overcome their fear of public speaking, educators can implement various techniques to build confidence and reduce anxiety. One effective method is to create a supportive classroom environment where students feel comfortable making mistakes and learning from them. Encouraging students to rehearse their presentations in small groups or in front of a trusted peer can help alleviate some of the pressure and build familiarity with the presentation material (Galloway, 2019).

Additionally, practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or visualization before the presentation can help students calm their nerves and focus on their performance. Educators can also teach students specific coping strategies for managing anxiety during the presentation, such as pausing to take a breath when feeling overwhelmed or making eye contact with friendly faces in the audience to build rapport and reduce nervousness (Brown & Levinson, 2017).

Another useful approach is to encourage gradual exposure to public speaking. By starting with low-stakes activities, such as short [group discussions](#) or one-minute presentations, students can slowly build their confidence and gradually work their way up to longer, more formal presentations. This incremental approach helps students gain experience in managing their anxiety and developing their presentation skills over time (Thompson, 2020).

Time Management During Presentations

Managing time effectively is a critical skill for successful presentations. For EFL students, balancing clarity and depth within the allotted time can be particularly challenging, especially when they are still developing their language skills. Educators can help students improve their time management by teaching them how to prioritize information and stay on schedule during their presentations.

Helping Students Maintain Clarity and Stay on Schedule

One of the most common mistakes students make during presentations is spending too much time on the introduction or getting caught up in explaining minor details, leaving little time for the main content and conclusion (Williams & Thompson, 2018). EFL students, in particular, may find it difficult to gauge how much time to spend on each section of their presentation, especially if they are not fully confident in their language abilities.

To help students manage their time effectively, educators can encourage them to practice their presentations using a timer to ensure that each section is given the appropriate amount of attention. Setting clear time limits for the introduction, body, and conclusion can help students maintain a balanced structure and ensure that they have enough time to cover all key points without rushing through the material (Hyland, 2009).

Additionally, providing students with a framework for organizing their content can help them prioritize the most important information. For example, students can be taught to start with a brief overview of their topic, present the main findings or arguments, and then conclude with a summary or call to action (Thompson, 2020). This structured approach allows students to focus on the key points and avoid going off on tangents that can eat into their time.

Training Students to Prioritize Information in Presentations

One of the most effective ways to help students manage their time during presentations is to teach them how to prioritize information. EFL students may be tempted to include too much detail or explain every aspect of their research, but this can lead to information overload and result in an unfocused presentation (Lowe, 2016). Training students to identify the most important points and focus on those during their presentations ensures that they can communicate their message clearly and concisely.

Instructors can guide students in creating a hierarchy of information, where the most critical points are presented first, followed by supporting details or examples. This approach not only helps students stay on track but also ensures that the audience receives the key takeaways, even if the presentation runs short on time (Williams & Thompson, 2018). Encouraging students to practice summarizing their research or arguments in one or two sentences can also help them develop the ability to prioritize information and convey it clearly.

In addition, educators can introduce students to techniques such as signposting, where they use verbal cues to indicate transitions between sections of their presentation. For example, phrases like “firstly,” “moving on to,” or “in conclusion” can help students stay organized and ensure that they cover all parts of their presentation within the allotted time (Hyland, 2009).

Conclusion

Teaching presentation skills to EFL students in STEM subjects is a multifaceted process that requires careful attention to both language development and technical content. Throughout this article, we have explored several key strategies that educators can use to help EFL learners overcome the unique challenges they face in delivering clear, effective presentations. From addressing language proficiency issues and simplifying technical jargon to providing constructive feedback and incorporating technology, each approach plays a crucial role in building students' confidence and competence.

One of the most important takeaways from this discussion is the significance of structure and clarity in STEM presentations. EFL students benefit greatly from having a clear framework for organizing their thoughts, supported by well-designed visual aids that enhance their message. Educators should also focus on creating a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable practicing their presentation skills, receiving feedback, and gradually improving over time.

The long-term benefits of mastering presentation skills extend far beyond the classroom. In academia, effective presentation skills allow students to communicate their research, share ideas with colleagues, and contribute to scientific discussions. In the professional world, these skills are equally valuable, enabling STEM graduates to present their findings to stakeholders, collaborate with international teams, and advocate for their work with clarity and confidence. For EFL students, mastering these skills can open doors to new opportunities and help them establish themselves as respected professionals in their field.

Finally, respectful communication remains at the core of effective teaching and learning. By providing constructive, supportive feedback and recognizing the cultural and linguistic challenges EFL students face, educators can create a positive environment where students feel empowered to

express themselves and grow. Teaching presentation skills is not just about technical competence; it is also about fostering a sense of respect and confidence in students, helping them to succeed in both their academic and professional journeys.

In conclusion, by adopting thoughtful teaching approaches and focusing on both language and technical content, educators can help EFL students develop the presentation skills they need to thrive in STEM fields. Respectful communication, structured instruction, and continuous practice are the keys to unlocking their potential and preparing them for future success.

References

- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (2017). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Galloway, N. (2019). *Global Englishes and [language teaching](#): A review of pedagogical practices*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hughes, G., & Lavery, M. (2020). The importance of structure in academic presentations. *Academic Journal of Presentations*, 42(2), 67-83.
- Hyland, K. (2009). *Academic discourse: English in a global context*. Continuum.
- Leki, I. (2018). *Academic writing: Exploring processes and strategies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lowe, M. (2016). Communication in STEM: The role of presentation skills in science and technology. *STEM Journal*, 24(3), 45-61.
- Thompson, D. (2020). Professional communication in engineering: Best practices.

Engineering Today, 56(7), 89-105.

Williams, S., & Thompson, J. (2018). Enhancing presentation skills: Techniques for STEM students. *Journal of Science Communication*, 34(1), 23-35.

Cite this article

APA: EFL Cafe. (2024, October 26). Teaching Presentation Skills to EFL Students for STEM Subjects. EFLCafe.net.

<https://eflcafe.net/teaching-presentation-skills-to-efl-students-for-stem-subjects/>

In-text citation: (EFL Cafe, 2025)

MLA: EFL Cafe "Teaching Presentation Skills to EFL Students for STEM Subjects." EFLCafe.net, 26 Oct. 2024, <https://eflcafe.net/teaching-presentation-skills-to-efl-students-for-stem-subjects/>.

In-text citation: (EFL Cafe)