

Session 4: Presenting your Research – TU Delft

- Asking Questions
- Handling Questions
- Handling Problem Questions
- Presentations & Feedback

3 Types of Constructive Questions

- Factual
- Clarifying
- Exploratory



Created by Llisole
from Noun Project

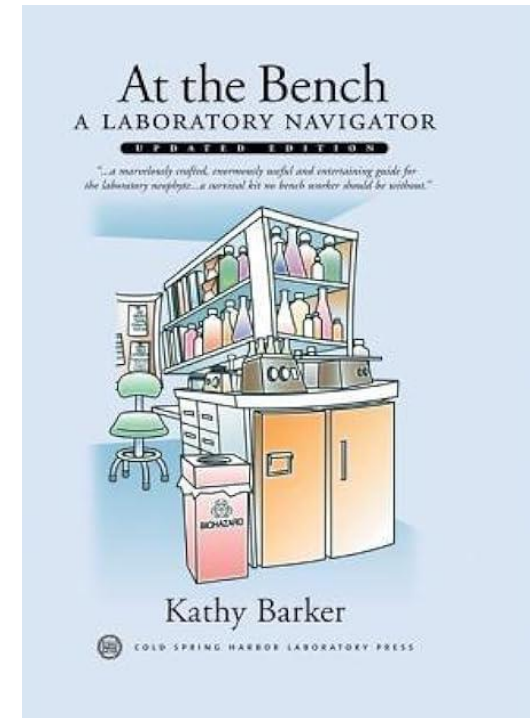
Source: Heady, C and Vossler J. (2013) "Conference Presentations and the Art of Asking Effective Questions." LOEX

Asking Questions... -1

**Asking questions
requires some courage.**

It is natural to hesitate or shy away

This book describes the reluctance of
people when asking questions



Asking Questions... -2

Your Inner Voice

Ignore your inner voice when it says...

- My question won't interest anyone else, so I'll ask the speaker later.
- I won't be able to express my question, it is too complicated.
- I'm probably supposed to know the answer, it is my field.

Asking Questions... -3

Your Inner Voice

Ignore your inner voice when it says...

- It is too obvious a question. Everyone else knows the answer.
- I don't want to look stupid or unread.
- I don't want to have a confrontation in public
- I must have missed the explanation. I can't let on that I wasn't paying attention.

Asking Questions... -4

What tips do you have for asking constructive questions?



©

TAALCENTRUM - VU
Make your words work.

Source: Heady, Christina; Vossler, Joshua. (2013)
Conference Presentations and the Art of Asking
Effective Questions

Asking Questions... -5

10 Pro Tips For Asking Constructive Questions

- 10 – Your opinion does not matter
- 9 – Use simple language
- 8 – Keep it brief
- 7 – Disagree later
- 6 – Limit yourself to one question

Asking Questions... -6

10 Pro Tips For Asking Constructive Questions

- 5 – If the presenter avoids the question, let them get away
- 4 – Don't pad your question with references
- 3 – If possible, begin your question with an interrogative
 - who, what, why, where, when, how
- 2 – Don't use questions as weapons
- 1 – Tone accounts for a lot

Asking Questions -8

Some general tips ...

- Listen actively
- Take notes - **Don't wait until the end to come up with questions**
- First question? Thank speaker
- Summarise what the speaker has said and then ask your question

Asking Questions -9

Things to question:

Methodology

Theoretical framework

Interpretation data & theory

Link between data & conclusion

Other ... ?

Give an example of a question regarding your own research

Asking Questions -10

More general tips ...

- Ask question concisely, clearly and politely
- Remain friendly: can be critical, not blunt:
 - Blunt: Wouldn't you agree that you've selected the wrong research group?
 - Critical: *Could you explain why you have selected that particular research group?*

Some Examples Asking Questions

Open document in online course:

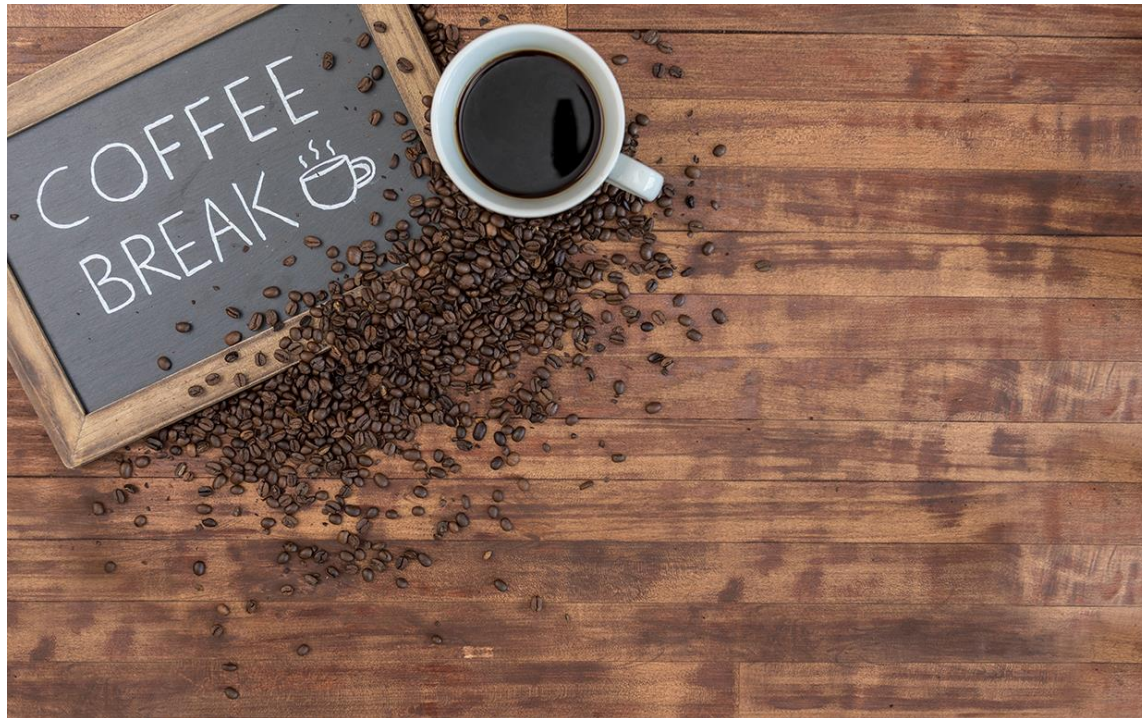
- *‘Q&A tips for Asking and Answering Questions’*
 - Review examples of question types and questions asked during scientific presentations, pages 3 and 4.

Activity: Asking Questions

Let's practice!

- If possible, form groups of 3 based on similar field of research
- One person reads the abstract of their research out loud [remember using good pace and intonation!] or describes the abstract content in more *layman terms* [good pacing!] if others not in your field.
- Others listen carefully and ask constructive questions: factual, clarifying and/or exploratory
- Time: 7 to 10 minutes per person

Let's take a break!



Answering Questions: 5 easy steps

1. Carefully listen and make eye contact with the questioner
2. Ask for clarification, if the question is unclear
3. Repeat the question in your own words before answering
 - ensures everyone heard & understood it too
4. Focus on answering the question - don't digress too far from the point - look at the audience
5. Summarize your answer if it was long & verify you had answered sufficiently

Source: v.d. Water, H., Verlinden, T. (2021) The Floor is Yours: Because Life is too Short for Bad Presentations,, Ghent, Belgium: Academia Press

Answering Questions: during or at the end?

- **A combination is advisable:**
 - » During: short answers to clarify points
 - » Q&A at end: longer answers to expand on topic
- Give ‘question policy’ during introduction
- Leave some time for possible brief questions during the presentation

Handling Problem Questions -1

- **Multiple questions:**
 - Write down, repeat one by one, make selection
- **Rambling questions:**
 - Paraphrase before answering
- **Sceptical/critical questions:**
 - First look for common ground before refuting criticism
- **Difficult questions:**
 - Don't bluff your way through it

Handling Problem Questions -2

- **Aggressive Questions:**
 - Remain calm and polite (could be due to cultural differences)
- **Irrelevant ('stupid') questions:**
 - Briefly answer question politely

Handling Questions - more tips

- **Know your audience - prepare for Q & A-session:**
 - What extra info might someone need?
 - What is controversial?
 - What related issues might someone think of?
- **Extra tips:**
 - Don't interrupt the questioner
 - Don't spend too much time on one single question; suggest a chat afterwards
 - Always show respect to your audience, but keep control of your presentation

Reminder: helpful phrases in book

Don't forget the 'Presenting in English' course book PDF section 5 has pages of useful phrases for:

- 5.1 Handling questions
- 5.2 Having a discussion with your audience

Exercise: Handling Questions

Go to session 4 and download

- *Exercise: Handling Questions*

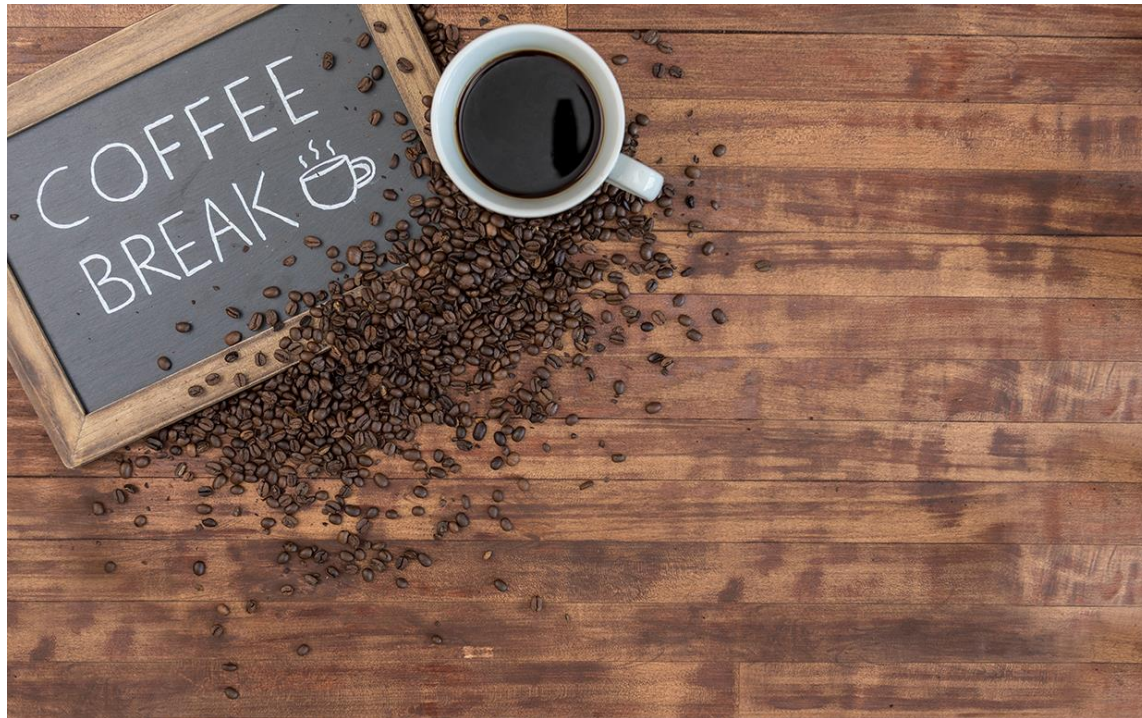
Discuss the questions in pairs or a small group

Some Examples Handling Questions

Open Presenting in English course book in online course:

- *Chapter 5 - Work with your audience: questions and discussion – pages 31-33*
- *Chapter 2 – sub-section: Responding & reacting to what audience asks or says, pages 15-16*
 - Which of the common phrases/responses do you think you would use?
 - Are there any you wouldn't? How would you rephrase them?

Let's take a break!



Presentations

- 10 minutes total for presentation
- 2 to 5 minutes for questions
- 15 minutes for feedback
- Use the peer feedback form

TIP

Film your presentation
& record feedback

Self-study for session 5

- ❖ Review PPTs and watch video links
- ❖ Review documents and websites on ELO
- ❖ If presented today: use recorded feedback to reassess your Johari matrix self-reflection
- ❖ Continue with making your poster presentation
- ❖ Use feedback form to help plan your presentations