

MAKING GREAT ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

Professor Angela Thody lectures on many aspects of research writing and presentation. This is one of many and has been delivered to groups of post graduate students in all disciplines.

For more information about the author

or to book her to lecture about writing and presenting research

www.angelathody.com

Professor Angela Thody, Centre for Education Research and Development

University of Lincoln, Brayford Campus, Lincoln, LN6 7TS

Phone: 01522 886071

Email: athody@lincoln.ac.uk/ angelathody450@hotmail.com

See also her book: *Writing and Presenting Research*,

London:Sage, 2006

Keywords; speeches; conference presentations; communication; speaking; audience; listeners; kearnars; research; power point

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

There are no hiding places for your personality when you are making a presentation. Even if you do not consciously plan the impression you will make on the audience, they will subconsciously assess you from seemingly unimportant signals from your clothes, your body language, the confidence with which you handle your visual aids and notes, your tone of voice and whether or not you make eye contact with them. This assessment will largely precede anything you say and can influence how your research is rated (Thody, 2006:209)

What you are stands over you and thunders so I cannot hear what you say (Anon)

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

**You're in the lift (elevator) at a conference.
Also in the lift, there's another delegate whom you
don't know. You both have to travel ten floors to
the conference lecture hall (about 30 seconds)**

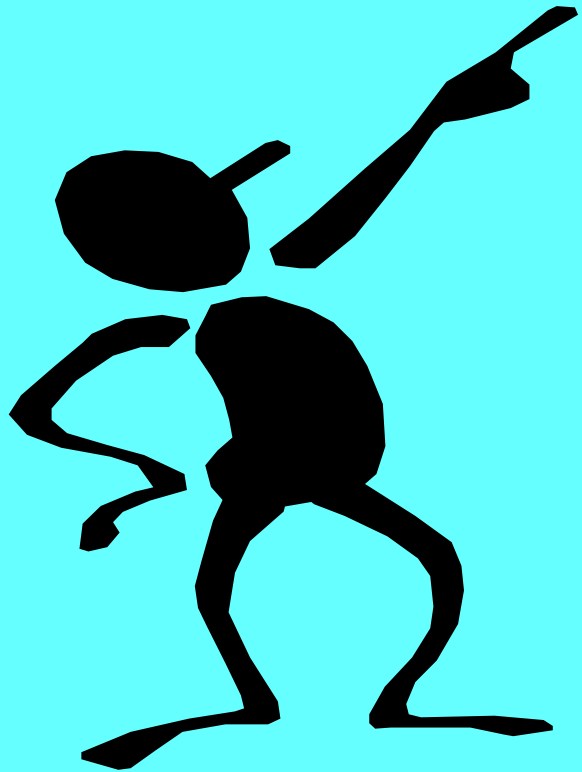
- a) Find out who he/she is, her/his area of expertise and if you need to 'know' this person.
- b) Make an impression - let the other person know who you are and why you're at the conference.



- i) **Mentally rehearse what you'll say**
- ii) **Work in pairs standing side by side – to introduce yourselves.**
Move on to someone else after each 30 seconds is signalled

ORAL PRESENTATIONS
ARE ALL ABOUT

PERSUADING...



...others to remember
you and your research
favourably

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

To persuade you to remember today's learning:
a short version of the power points is on the virtual campus to
download until 12 February.

Post-course queries?: athody@lincoln.ac.uk

**TAKE YOUR OWN NOTES TODAY ON ANYTHING YOU THINK THAT
YOU WILL NEED IN ADDITION TO THE SLIDES**

**Write now any questions about academic presentations that you want
answering today.**

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

SO: list the names of everyone
in this room and what you've
learnt about them

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

Challenges facing presenters...

Time is short.

Audience concentration span is limited

Data has to be even more reduced than for text.

*The intricacies of reasoning and proof have to be
simplified to be readily conveyed in speech.*

Listeners' memories are fleeting for a speech's content
but lengthy for its success or failure as a performance.

**Some academic audiences enjoy entertainment while others
regard entertainment with anathema.**

**Oral presentation provides much better opportunities to
inspire and enthuse an audience than does text.**

**Your academic career needs solid respectability but combined
with memorable performance that will encourage repeat
invitations for you as a speaker.**

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

CREATING PP SLIDES:

What made that last slide good or bad as a visual aid?

Size of text varies; colours poor re
Background;
Order /hierarchy not established;
Looks boring – no pictures;
Too wordy; diagrams/pictures needed
Highlights needed; words in italics – less clear;
Boldness needed;
Background colour is calm;
Presenter was moving so slide less important
Has everything in – should it have been more than one slide?

Font – size, colour, type

Background

Number of points

Visuals

Sound.
Movement

Reading the visual aid

Reminders

Aim: too persuade

**Challenges: little time, little audience concentration;
audience memories are long for a poor presentation;
some entertainment wanted; needs to be memorable;
has to reduce and simplify data and conclusions;
must have visual appeal**

**NOW JUDGE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MY POSTER
IN THE LIGHT OF THESE AIMS AND CHALLENGES**

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

For presentations, think about:

A AUDIENCE

A AIMS

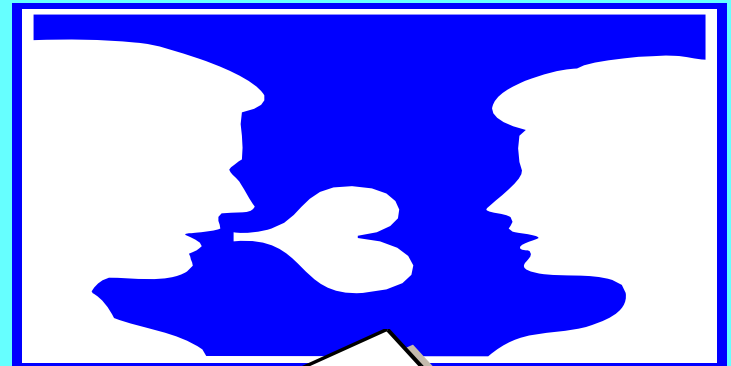
A ACTUALITIES

A ANTECEDENTS

A ARRANGING

A AUDIBILITY

A AFTERWARDS





THINK ABOUT AUDIENCE

Who?

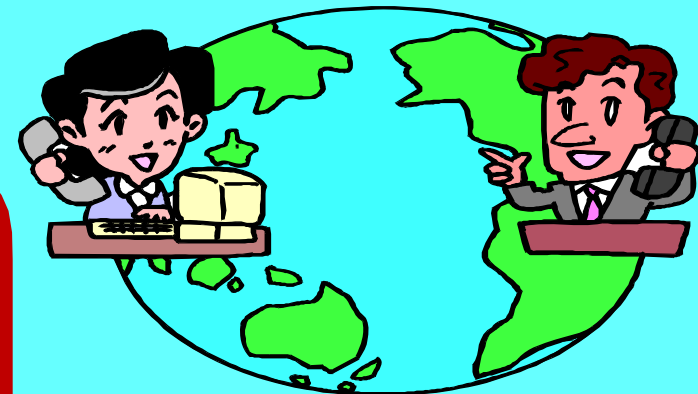
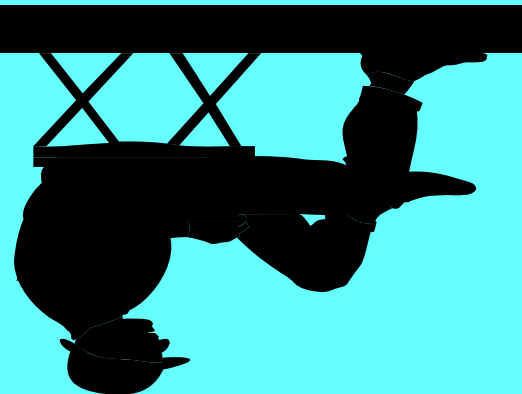
What is their relationship to you?

How much do they already know?

What is their level of education?

What mood are they in?

When and where will they hear your presentation?



Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: THINK ABOUT AUDIENCE

A little practice...analyse these academic audiences (answer the questions on the previous slide)

Conference delegates at a poster or round table session

Conference delegates at a keynote or paper session

Students at a lecture

Faculty at a seminar

Potential research sponsors







Current research sponsors

**Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: THINK ABOUT AUDIENCE**

Whatever the characteristics of specific audiences, allow for all being somewhat tired, bored, wanting to be entertained, easily distracted, easily losing track of what you are saying, not always able to hear and see as well as you can.



Adjust for AUDIENCE

-  the length of the speech/amount of text on a poster
-  type of words used
-  what can be left out
-  what must be put in
-  what they expect of the format
-  the order in which material is presented

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: THINK ABOUT THE AUDIENCE

- 1) Reflect on the visual appeal of your own posters for a conference audience
a) to whom you are talking about the poster
b) who may be around the poster session when you are not present

- 2) In pairs, give each other feedback on the visual effectiveness of each poster for a conference audience at a poster session.

While one in the pair gives feedback, the other is to employ active listening techniques.

Take notes of your partner's opinions.



- 2) Now let's include you in the picture...how did you look while you were talking to your colleague?

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

For presentations, think about:

A UDIENCE 

A IMS

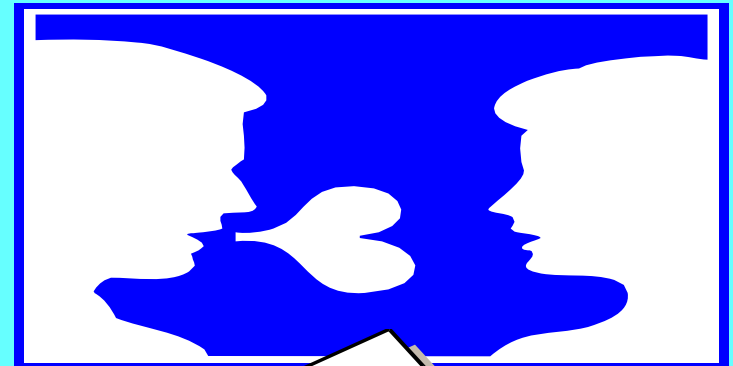
A CTUALITIES

A NTECEDENTS

A RRANGING

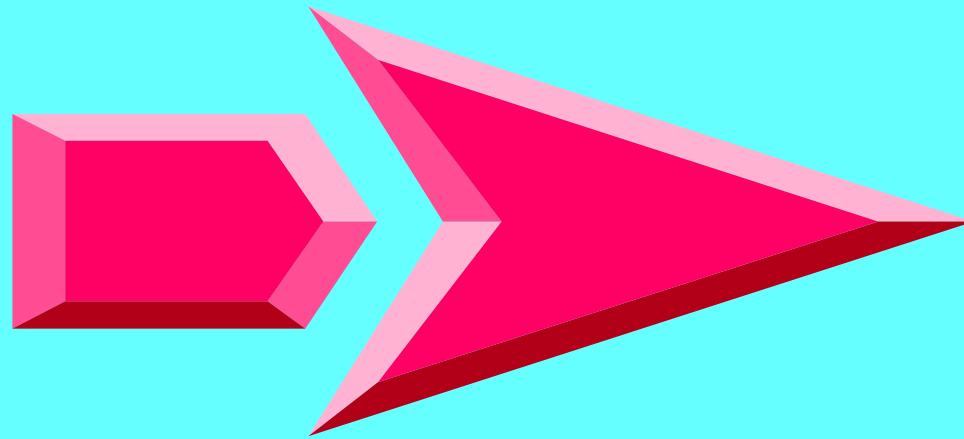
A UDIBILITY

A FTERWARDS



AIMS

- a) what do you want to achieve from your presentation?
- b) what does the recipient want to achieve?



Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: THINK ABOUT AIMS

Analyse your aims and those of these academic audiences

Conference delegates at a poster or round table session

Conference delegates at a keynote or paper session

Students at a lecture

Faculty at a seminar

Potential research sponsors

Current research sponsors

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: THINK AIMS

THE GENERAL DEFAULTS ON AIMS ARE:

Audience's - to gain information in an easier way than reading for themselves, to go away feeling they have learnt something difficult but have still felt entertained

Yours - *to be remembered for good research*
to persuade the audience to your point of view
to be asked back

Adjusting for the aims -

- ✉ the length of the presentation/poster
- ✉ type of words used
- ✉ what can be left out of the presentation/poster
- ✉ what must be put in
- ✉ what will make the most persuasive format
- ✉ the order in which material is presented

**HOW WELL DO THE SAMPLE POSTERS MEET THEIR
AIMS AND THE AUDIENCE'S NEEDS?**

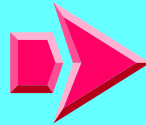
Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

For presentations, think about:

A AUDIENCE



A IMS



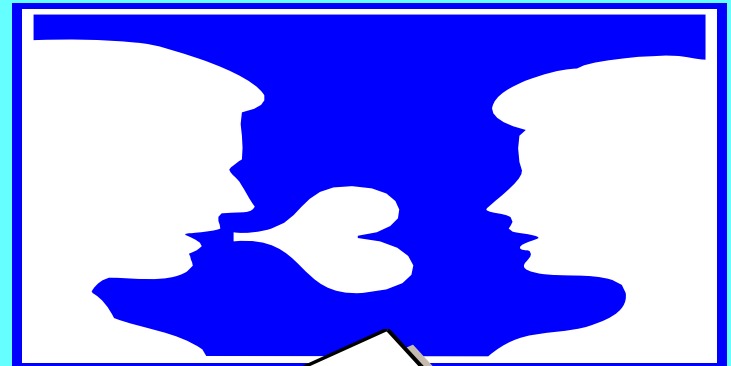
A CTUALITIES

A NTECEDENTS

A RRANGING

A UDIBILITY

A FTERWARDS

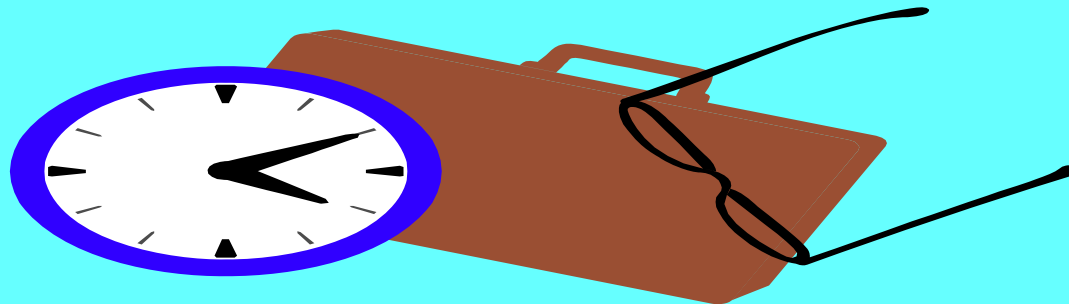


ACTUALITIES

***What time, money, technical skills and resources do you have to devote to preparing your presentation?
(share ideas from your own posters on this)***

How much time does the audience want to devote to your presentation?

Where will it be held? What equipment will there be?



Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: THINK ACTUALITIES

KEEP EXACTLY TO TIME/ALLOTTED SPACE

CHECK EQUIPMENT, ROOMS AND SPACE IN ADVANCE

HAVE BACKUPS

AND REMEMBER...

**Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: THINK ACTUALITIES**

Thody's Laws of Presentations



**Prepare for the worst;
hope for the best;
don't expect what was promised;
accept that your best is what you are capable of
producing in the time available;
be able to laugh about it;
don't tell the audience what's gone wrong.**

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: AIMS AND AUDIENCES

Reflect on your poster presentation.

What will you say or do to persuade passers-by to stop and listen?

Practise your opening sentence(s) with a colleague



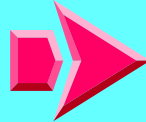
Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

For presentations, think about:

A AUDIENCE



A AIMS



A ACTUALITIES

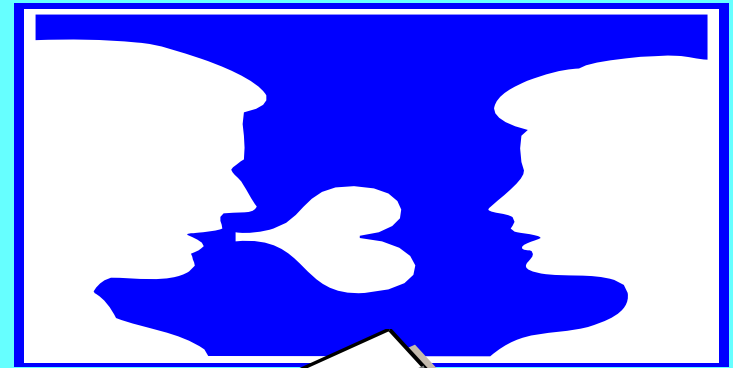


A ANTECEDENTS

A ARRANGING

A AUDIBILITY

A AFTERWARDS

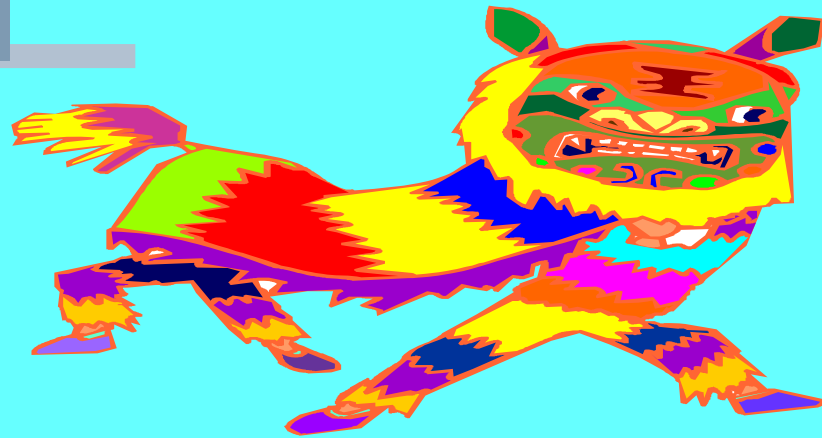


ANTECEDENT(S)

In what format are posters, conference papers, lectures, faculty seminars etc., conventionally delivered?



Do I follow this format or break away into something partly or wholly new? Try the quiz. See table of examples



Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: THINK ANTECEDENTS

REFLECT ON YOUR POSTERS

SUGGEST AN ALTERNATIVE



SUGGEST AN ALTERNATIVE

REFLECT ON YOUR POSTERS

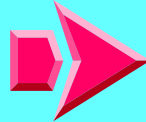
Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

For presentations, think about:

A AUDIENCE



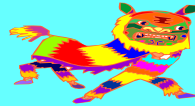
A AIMS



A ACTUALITIES



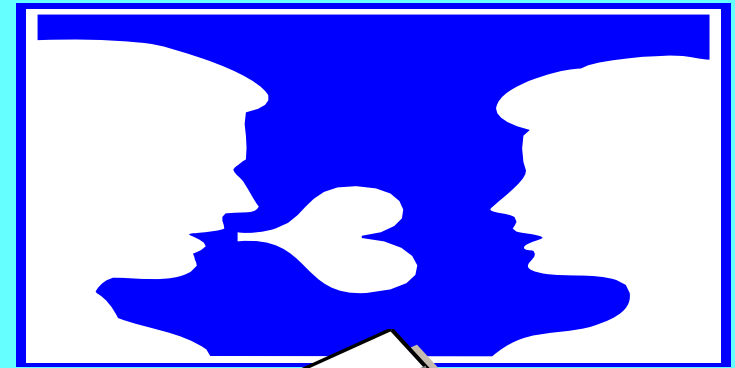
A ANTECEDENTS



A ARRANGING

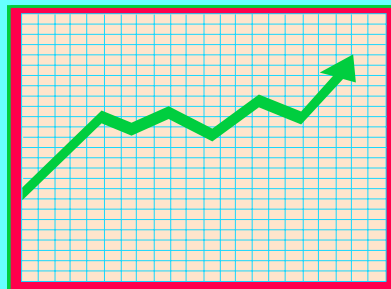
A AUDIBILITY

A AFTERWARDS



ARRANGING PRESENTATIONS

- 1) Reflect briefly on audience, aims, actualities, antecedents**
- 2) Audit what you've already got: previous presentations and your written text**
- 3) Decide TACTICS – general style**



ARRANGING PRESENTATIONS/POSTERS

4) Content - template

Introduction	Overview – research question; why it matters; what’s coming.
Centre	What you did, how you did it, what you found, what others found. As few main points as possible.
End	Repeat main points and who you are (for a poster, these are provided through a handout to give away and a business card)

CHECK THE POSTERS AND YOUR OWN – DO THESE MEET THIS FORMAT?

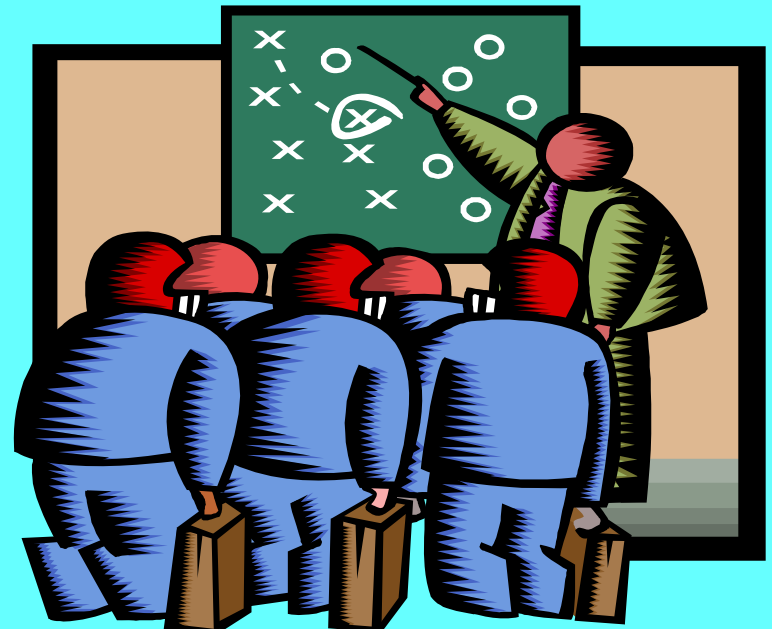
Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: THINK AUDIBILITY

AUDIBILITY =

Exaggerated articulation

Speak slightly more slowly than in normal conversation

Project your voice



The optional extras: humour, visuals

The non-optional extra: REHEARSAL



SO NOW - IT'S
REHEARSAL TIME

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: THINK AFTERSWARDS



AFTERSWARDS

Questioners and questions

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU WANT ANSWERED?

See your list.

FOLLOW UP

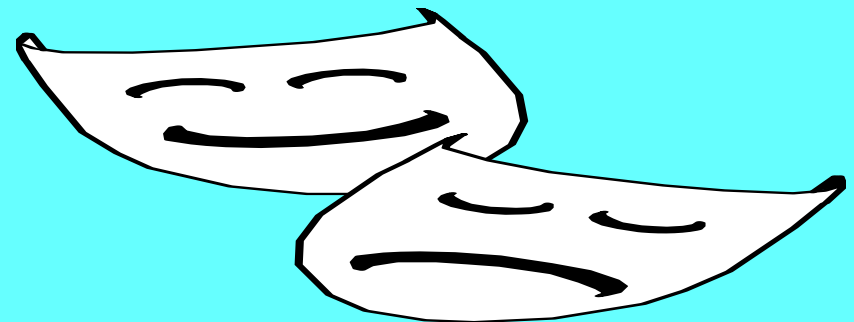
Invite anyone who wants to talk to you to stay on longer/meet for breakfast.

If you have copies left of your conference paper, don't throw them away; leave them on a table in the conference registration area.

Exchange business cards.

Contact those you met by email.

**AND KEEP SMILING:
YOU'RE STILL ON STAGE**



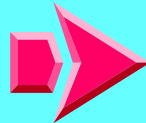
Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

For presentations, think about:

A AUDIENCE



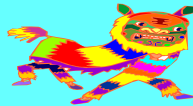
A AIMS



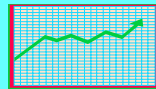
A ACTUALITIES



A ANTECEDENTS



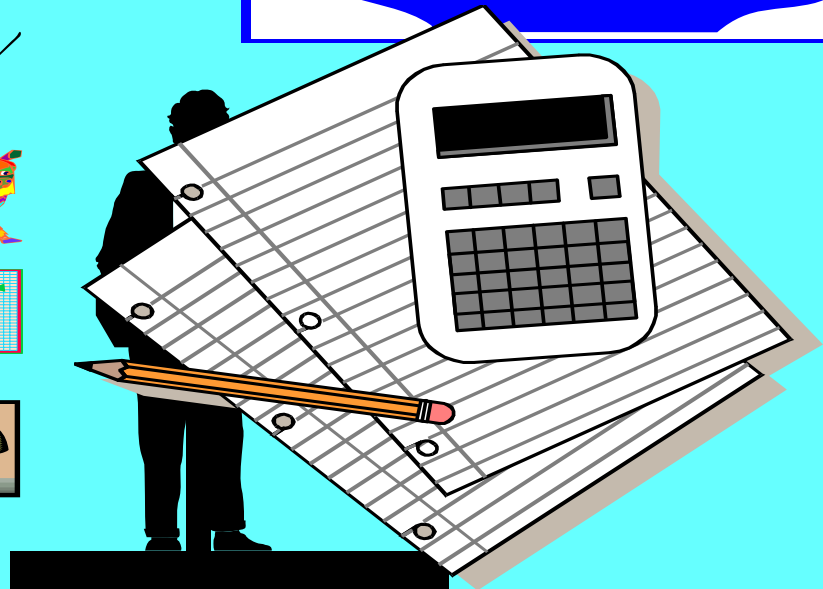
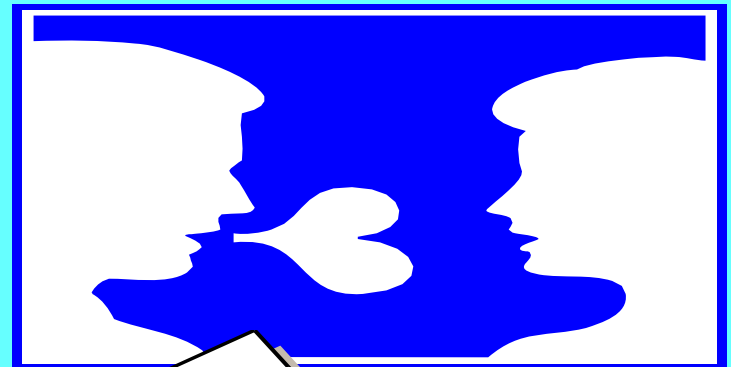
A ARRANGING



A AUDIBILITY



A AFTERWARDS



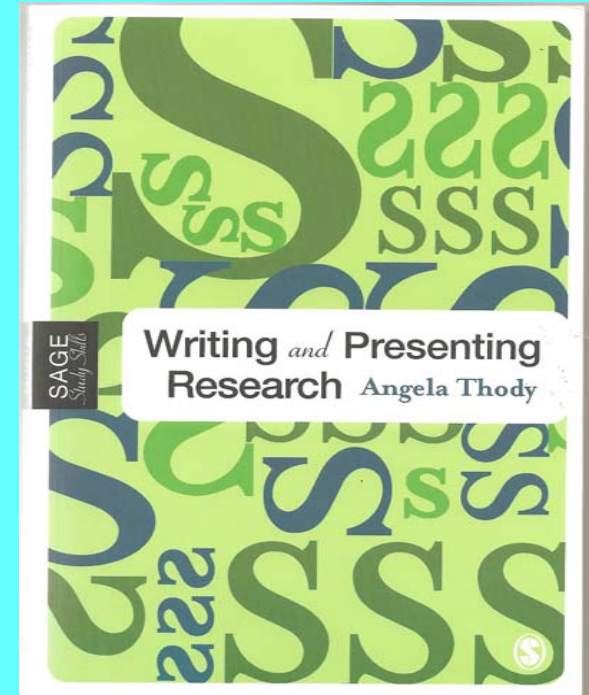
Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

You've seen the film,
now read the book:

Thody, A M (2006)

Writing and Presenting Research.

London:Sage.



**A short version of the power points is on the virtual campus to
download until 12 February.**

Post-course queries?: athody@lincoln.ac.uk

Emerita Professor Angela Thody

**CENTRE FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT**



**Learning for Leading
Leading Learning
*University of Lincoln***

Lincoln University Graduate School: Professor Emerita Angela Thody
PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH: ARRANGING PRESENTATIONS