Interaction between you and your audience is so important, we talk about it twice in these micro-learning modules. It was the very first technique under “Time:” engage with the audience right away. There are four more expert-presenter strategies for interacting with your participants, as well.

But first, a quick skill check. Think of a conference session you’ve attended recently. How often were you asked to actually do something—anything—during the session? What were your tasks?

The first interaction strategy is “10 and 2.” In driver’s ed, they used to tell us to keep our hands at 10 and 2 on the steering wheel. Even though they teach “9 and 3” to 16-year-olds today (because of airbags, if you’re wondering), the concept of 10 and 2 is a great one for presentations. If you give information for 10 minutes, make sure to have 2 minutes of some kind of action for participants to take. Don’t cheat on this ratio, either: for every 10 minutes of you talking, allow for 2 minutes of audience interaction: writing ideas, talking with a neighbor, playing a game, doing a scavenger hunt on their phones. The act of taking a break is what makes information stick from the presentation.
To get better interactions, remember QQQ: Qualitative versus Quantitative Questions. Instead of asking, say, “how many of you have encountered student-information-system glitches,” re-frame it qualitatively. “How often do you encounter SIS data problems?” “What happened the last time you identified a glitch in the SIS?” Just shifting away from closed-ended to open-ended questions increases interaction.

Use short quizzes and polls to keep people’s attention. Here’s a one-question quiz: which of these snow-leopard kittens is cuter? Of course, make the questions fit your take-aways. This visual also reminds you to use the unexpected in your presentations. See what we did, there? Oh, and it’s the one on the right.

Inclusion in your interactions goes way beyond calling on various people during Q&A. Ask for feedback in various ways, both verbal and written. Purposely engage with everyone: give participants small blank sheets of paper, and ask them to write down their ideas before sharing with a neighbor. Make sure participants have enough time to think and respond during your interactions. Collect written responses and pull a few randomly to respond to.
Sarah Archer is a speaking coach, and she has a great 1-minute video with tips for increasing interaction. Check out her real-world expertise, and then come back here.

It’s time to build your presentation. For a 45-minute time slot, plan at least three interactions for your audience—and be sure to START with interaction. Jot down your ideas for chunking up your material with breaks for interaction, shifting to qualitative questions, and using quizzes to keep your audience engaged. Pause this video, and come back when you have your notes completed.

This micro-learning module on interaction is just a start. To learn more, check out Wienot Films’ How to Give an Awesome Presentation, and in just three minutes, learn more secrets of rock-star presenters.

Now that you have completed this micro-learning module on Interaction, where will you go next? If you have completed all of the main modules, congratulations on completing the series.

Are you going to give a webinar or be part of a panel session? Check out the optional super-micro module that applies, too. Thank you for working on this micro-learning module series!