

Ten Years of Listening

prepared by Alan Timcke FISV

For many years I have been privileged to be a listener at RMIT final year student presentations. I have to state that the standard of the presentations over the last few years has notched up a 100% improvement since the earlier 2010 presentations. This is a result of emphasis being placed on the importance of graduates being competent and capable of presenting theories or procedures on all manner of professional matters. Much of the improvement must be credited to the teaching staff at RMIT for their nurturing and support of the students.

In my earlier years of listening I was struck by the often used expression “Well, I might as well start” followed by the presenter looking at his or her feet and mumbling in an inaudible voice. I acknowledge that presenting a paper to a mixed group of fellow professionals is a very daunting task for any student and, in particular, for a final year student whose performance is assessed by RMIT staff and members of the surveying community.

However, it needs to be emphasised that the whole of the surveying industry is judged on the quality and detail in the presentation of the presenter. RMIT Chris Bellman makes the point that a talk to other professional bodies must first of all be interesting then technically arresting and attention grabbing.

This year the students were required to make a video of their presentation then to present it on a ‘Zoom’ meeting to fellow students and members of the surveying fraternity. This they did very well.

It is to be noted that all students must be aware that in their professional life they will be required, on occasions, to give details of procedures, methods, calculations and documents which will be scrutinized by other callings. For this reason the final year talk by students is an excellent training ground for future activities.

The importance of a structured talk is close to the Defence Services method – Introduction, Topic of instruction, Details of the talk and its aim, Conclusion then Questions to the audience. Talks should be limited to a maximum of 40 minutes.

I have enjoyed my years as a listener, critic and commentator to the various technical papers and I assure all final year students that their thoughts and conclusions are important to fellow surveyors and all associated callings.

I hope to listen to the students for years to come.