

Oral Presentations

Your audience should:

- Understand your work
- Be INTERESTED in it
- Think you're a good presenter

Your Focus

- Content
- Preparation
- Visuals
- Delivery Skills
- Positive Attitude

Engaging Your Audience

- Know your topic
- Know your audience
- Know your location
- Display a positive attitude
- Work on voice projection and body language

Content and Organization

Organization

- chronology
- problem-solving approach
- persuasion

Unity previews; repetition; segues; summaries

Clarity purpose statement; preview; simple vocabulary; examples; summaries

Know Your Topic

- Be prepared to get questions:
- Know WHEN to say "I don't know"
- Know HOW to say "I don't know"
- Don't just stand there uncomfortably
- Be able to recover from interruptions
- Know what to skip if you're running late
- Don't just talk faster!

Know Your Audience

- Motivation
- Background
 - How much hand-holding will they need?
 - Can you jump right into specifics?
 - How detailed should you get?

Know Your Location

- How far is the audience from the screen?
- What equipment you will need:
 - Transparencies

- A laser pointer
- A laptop, a CD
- Internet access (consider emailing your presentation in advance)

Visuals: Slide Design

- Slides should
 - Convey the necessary information
 - Be readable/understandable
 - Be interesting (enough)
- Slides should not be
 - Over-stimulating or boring

Outline

- If you have an outline slide, make it USEFUL
 - Everyone introduces their topic (hopefully)
 - Everyone explains their work and gives results
 - What is specific to YOUR talk?
- Talk length determines the need for an outline
 - If your talk is 45 minutes, maybe you need an extensive outline
 - If your talk is 5 minutes, you probably do not need an extensive outline

Segue: transition between speakers

- Chen Li: Now Anna is going to talk to you about the most important delivery component of presentations: the voice. Anna?
- Anna: Thank you, Chen Li. Certainly a presentation must be heard in order for it to be effective. This is why the voice plays the most important role in delivering information; without a voice, you don't have a presentation—at least not an oral presentation! In fact, you need to consider four basic components in order to master speaking: *volume, pitch, enunciation, and pace*.

Segue: flow and cohesion

Chen Li introduces Anna and previews her topic. When Anna begins to speak, she re-iterates her topic (indicated with the underline) and previews how her topic is organized (indicated in italics).

Seamlessly moving from one piece of information to another makes your presentation more engaging and professional.

Summary/Conclusion

- If your talk is more than 5 minutes, summarize your work and results
 - Bring people back if they zoned out
 - Remind them why you're great
- Give "selling" points here

Dealing with Anxiety

- Know your subject
- Rehearse
- Breathe
- Stretch
- Sleep
- Drink (water)

Attitude

- Are *YOU* interested in your topic?
 - If no, get a different one!
 - If yes, ACT LIKE IT.
- If *YOU* aren't excited...
 - You can't expect *OTHER* people to be!
- Don't talk down to audience
 - You know more than them about THIS
 - They know more than you about other stuff

Body Language

- Eye Contact
- Smile
- Posture
- Gestures
- Movement
- Is your back to the audience?
- Are you hiding behind the podium?
- Are your hands and face motionless?
- Are you staring at your advisor/boss? your laptop? the screen?
- IF SO... you're probably BORING! (You are a "talking head")

Hand Gestures

- Videotape yourself
- Practice with friends
- Don't point with your middle finger
- Do not keep repeating your set of gestures as you talk
- Make sure they aren't silly looking

Slide Design

- Font: sans serif, 24 pt. (minimum)
- Lists: for clarity
- 5-7 lines per slide
- Titles and labels for all graphics
- Time to discuss each slide: one minute (minimum)

README.TXT

- Do not attempt to put all the text, code, or explanation of what you are talking about directly onto the slide, especially if it consists of full, long sentences. Or paragraphs. There's no place for paragraphs on slides. If you have complete sentences, you can probably take something out.
- If you do that, you will have too much stuff to read on the slide, which isn't always a good thing.
- Like the previous slide, people do not really read all the stuff on the slides.
 - That's why it's called a "presentation" and not "a reading" of your work
- Practice makes perfect, which is what gets you away from having to have all of you "notes" in textual form on the screen in front of you.
- Utilize the Notes function of PowerPoint, have them printed out for your reference.
 - The audience doesn't need to hear the exact same thing that you are reading to them.
 - The bullet points are simply talking points and should attempt to summarize the big ideas that you

- are trying to convey
- If you've reached anything less than 18 point font, for God's sake, please:
 - Remove some of the text
 - Split up the text and put it on separate slides
 - Perhaps you are trying to do much in this one slide?
- Reading a slide is annoying. We *can* do that (even if we don't).

Font Size

- You are close to your monitor; your audience is far from the screen
- If you find yourself saying "you probably can't read/see this, but..."
 - Then you probably have a BAD SLIDE!
 - There are exceptions, but very few.
- Test your slides on a real screen in the conference room
 - Not just on your computer screen 15" away.

This is a really long title for this single slide, I should have just summarized all of this information

- Long titles are hard to read
- Many people don't read the title anyway
- The subtitle should have been "Long Slide Titles"
- People can't read text that runs off the side of the slide

Bullets Aren't Everything

- How many levels of hierarchy do you need?
 - Don't have only text on most of your slides
 - Try to draw diagrams wherever applicable

Colours look different on every LCD projector

- Colours look different between transparencies and projector
- There's more contrast on the monitor than on the projector
- Different projectors == different results
- Colours to avoid on white background:
 - Light Green
 - Light Blue
 - Pale Yellow
- Your slides should have good contrast
- White background, black text is clearest
 - You can use other (dark) text colours...
 - But be careful—don't be distracting!
- Make sure to avoid light-on-white or white-on-light

References

1. Compton, K., ECE, UW-Madison, & Chang, M.L., ECE, Olin College of Eng. 2003. *Terrible Presentations*.
2. Hope, M. Oral presentation strategies. In S. Stevenson & S. Whitmore. 2002. *Strategies for engineering communication*. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons. 147-86.
3. Pfeiffer, W.S. & J. Boogerd. 2004. Oral communication. *Technical writing*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Prentice Hall. 416-24.