

## **Presentation Advice**

### **Gleaned from Reports on Instructional Session Observations**

#### **Getting Started**

Choose title of presentation carefully – create the right expectations

Start with a few words of welcome. Introduce yourself.

A good Introduction provides

- a theme
- main points and objectives
- ground rules, so audience know what to expect and what you expect of them.
- context.

“Begin with the end in mind”

Greet audience individually

Use of info forms to get to know students (collect before starting) Use to tailor presentation. (A “sponge” activity)

If you can't be there early, be sure to provide clues to audience that they are in the right place (signs on door, room already set up...)

#### **Personal**

Good posture is important: don't slouch!

Don't rock back and forth

Don't put hands in pockets & jingle change!

Watch out for unconscious gestures (smoothing hair, touching chin...)

Watch your grooming

Swallow

What you wear can have an impact (bright pink in a drab room)

#### **Setting**

Light – keep on until necessary to lower (for projection, etc.)

Setting should allow students to focus. Be aware of distractions (“noise”)

Audience comfort

## **Presentation**

Voice: enunciate! project!

Face audience when speaking

Soft voice & no inflection = less authoritative

Make eye contact

Be aware of audience reaction

Be aware of the audience as a whole and as individuals

Repeat questions before answering

Don't speak too fast

Interpret – jargon, language

No in-jokes

Content is very important and can sometimes overcome presentation limitations.

Stay on track. If you digress, make sure audience sees where your digression is going and how it fits with topic.

Be succinct, but not abrupt.

Get your message across but do not overstate.

Know your audience's experience level. Make adjustments if necessary.

When teaching a database, providing background, scope, and what it can and can't do in introduction is very important.

When doing a demo – go slowly to allow audience to see what you are doing and why. Even an "experienced" audience can get lost.

Demo with follow-along hands-on

Present information in "absorbable chunks"

Present concrete applications as well as concepts

Hands-on whenever appropriate and possible

Use humor if you are comfortable with it

Combine facts and stories

Use real-life examples

Preparation shows respect for audience

Where you stand is important

Walk around if possible

With active learning activities do what group is comfortable with

Use an outline to stay on track

## **Presentation: Timing**

Being on time, ending on time shows respect for audience

Fit content to time. If you find yourself apologizing to audience for rushing or telling them they shouldn't worry if it's too much to absorb, think about cutting back the next time.

Don't apologize for lack of time. Prepare for it!

## **Props**

Powerpoint slides can help or can hinder

Pros & cons of using slides as "notes"

Make sure your technology is set up

Point to screen; don't use cursor to point

Use dry erase or chalkboard when appropriate

Handouts are important esp. with demos when audience has to watch and take notes at the same time. Be sure to bring enough handouts!

You don't always need to use a computer to teach computers

## **Ending**

End in an organized way: summarize, review

Let audience know how to contact you

Don't say "I'll shut up now." Don't discredit yourself!

Good ending: "if I have one piece of advice...."

## **Miscellaneous**

Classes (class sessions) where you are establishing a longer term relationship between presenter (instructor) and audience (students) = a different dynamic than a one-time presentation.

Have a backup plan

## **Summary of Comments on Five-Minute Presentations**

### **Good Things**

- ❖ Honesty & empathy
- ❖ Enthusiasm
- ❖ Using story to make a point
- ❖ Friendly "smiled a lot"
- ❖ Humor. Got the audience to chuckle at least once.
- ❖ Good descriptions, enabled audience to visualize
- ❖ Use of personal experience to demonstrate ideas, concepts
- ❖ Combination of theory and example
- ❖ Backed up thoughts with examples from life
- ❖ Audience participation
- ❖ Catchy introduction

### **Things to Improve**

- ❖ Organization (introduction—body—conclusion)
- ❖ Do not let voice trail off at end of sentences
- ❖ Reduce use of "filler words" such as "like, um, you know"
- ❖ Use inflection; don't speak in a monotone
- ❖ Don't stand absolutely still, use gestures
- ❖ Control rocking & other "rhythmic fidgeting"
- ❖ Try to keep hands away from the face during a presentation
- ❖ Don't talk too fast
- ❖ When sitting & speaking, do not talk into table
- ❖ Don't talk to your notes
- ❖ When using a visual aid, do not talk to the aid, talk to the audience
- ❖ Do not let visual aids take you away from the audience
- ❖ Eye contact with entire audience, not just one particular person
- ❖ Don't apologize when you make a mistake, it just draws attention to it
- ❖ If you make a claim, provide some evidence
- ❖ Try not to go off on tangents
- ❖ Present solutions or explanations
- ❖ Watch your grammar

## Other Comments

- ❖ A concise speech preferred to a rambling one
- ❖ We decided that less is more – that it is better to say what we have to say and end the talk early, rather than rambling on just to make it to the five-minute mark
- ❖ The conversational style lends itself to rambling if careful attention is not paid to staying focused
- ❖ Remember to breathe and try to relax. Slow down if you feel nervous.
- ❖ It is hard to keep track of what the rest of your body is doing when you are concentrating on your speech
- ❖ We liked the way they used “thank you” to end their presentations as opposed to “OK, that’s all I have to say.”
- ❖ Always introduce yourself
- ❖ Make sure that everyone in the audience can see you
- ❖ Be attentive when other panel members are speaking
- ❖ The more experience you get, the better you get
- ❖ Preparation (of content and organization) is important