Presentation Skills

Regina Frey
Washington University Teaching Center
http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu
“Effective lecturers combine the talents of scholar, writer, producer, comedian, showman, and teacher in ways that contribute to student learning.”

(W.J. McKeachie)
Principles of Effective Presentations

- Communicate your arguments and ideas
- Persuade your students that the arguments and ideas are valid
- Be interesting and entertaining
Outline

- Delivery and Style
- Students
- Content and Organization
- Questions
- Visual Aids
General Presentation Skills

- Use the classroom as a stage (move around)
- Think about the size of the classroom
- Have a presence; develop a teaching persona
- Prepare yourself emotionally for class
- Acknowledge the students when starting class
- Show passion/enthusiasm for the topic
- Be aware of student responses
General Presentation Skills

- Be able to laugh at yourself
- Practice your lecture/discussion
  - Practice in front of colleagues initially
  - Practice in the classroom, if possible
  - Prepare your introduction and summary
  - Practice with your visual aids
  - Do not read your notes
- Add “performance notes” to your lecture notes
- Eliminate distracting mannerisms
Delivery

- Appearance
  - Dress appropriately for the class

- How you stand
  - Stand with confidence
  - Do not lean on one foot
  - Do not aimlessly wave hands, jingle change, fiddle with pointer
  - Do not stand in front of the screen or face the screen
Delivery

- Facial expression
  - Enhances meaning of message
  - Compensates for the distance from students
- Eyes
  - Show confidence and interest
  - Interact with the students
  - Look at all students (not only the front)
  - Smile slightly
Delivery - Voice

- **Projection** – speak clearly
  - Slightly louder and slower than conversational tone
  - Use lower register of your voice
- **Variation** – pitch and speed
  - Emphasize important content by pausing
  - Allow students to assimilate information, or to respond to questions or humor
- Do not use filler words such as “um” or “you know”
Nonverbal Skills

- **Movement**
  - Do not allow the instructor’s desk or podium form a barrier
  - Movement forces students to focus
  - Walk intentionally *(no pacing)*
  - Maintain good posture

- **Gestures**
  - Smile before you say your first words
  - Use gestures *naturally* to emphasize points
Students

- Student characteristics
  - Knowledge base
  - Age, cultural background
  - Motivation for coming
  - Expectations

- What is the size of the class
Organization of Content

- Students listen between 25 – 50% of the time
- Information must be taken in immediately, no backtracking is possible
  - Short-term memory holds 5-7 points
  - People remember only 10% of what they hear and 50% of what they see
- Organize class session to help students to listen and remember
Cone of Learning

We Tend to Remember

- 10% Reading
- 20% Hearing Words
- 30% Looking at Pictures
- 50% Watching a Movie, Looking at an Exhibit, Watching a Demo, Seeing it Done on Location

Our Level of Involvement

- 70% Participating in a Discussion, Giving a Talk
- 90% Doing a Dramatic Presentation, Simulating the Real Experience, Doing the real thing

Organization-of-content Skills

- Teaching (lecturing or discussion) has features of a presentation or speech
- Have an introduction, body, summary
  - Begin each class with a list objectives or outline
  - End with an interesting problem or question
- Have a theme or storyline for course content
  - Give context for the material
  - Make smooth transitions between topics
- Student attention span is 15-20 minutes
- Give wait time in class
Questions

- Prepare
- Encourage questions
- Listen to entire question before responding
- Pause before answering
- Rephrase the question out loud
- Answer the question as honestly and the best that you can
- Ask the questioner if you have answered his or her question before moving on
Board Skills

- Write legibly and large enough to be seen in the back of the room
- Think about the organization of the material on the board
  - Fill one board at a time
  - Do not scrunch in words at the very bottom of the board (or in the margins of the board)
  - Erase a board only when you have run out of room
Board Skills

- Underline or mark major assumptions, conclusions, etc.
- Use color to clarify points.
  - Check which colors are most visible
- Do not erase mistakes on previous boards
  - Cross out and write the correction in
  - This is what the students must do
Visual-aid Skills – Design Hints

- Keep the design simple
  - Choose color scheme and font for clarity
  - Make sure text can be seen in back of room
  - Use horizontal (landscape) shape, not vertical (portrait)
  - Put a title on each visual
- Limit number of ideas on each visual
- Use color for emphasis
- Use graphics only when appropriate
Visual-aid Skills – Text Considerations

- Use single words or phrases
- Use short quotes, and not long extracts from documents
- Use summary lists
- Organize the information visually in addition to organizing by content
Visual-aid Skills – Presentation Considerations

- Check out classroom and be trained on multimedia equipment before classes start
  - If needed, book and check out the multimedia equipment in advance
- Check on the placement of the:
  - Instructor’s desk
  - Screen or chalkboard
  - Technology
- Use too few visuals rather than too many
  - However, exactly the right number of visuals is the goal!
  - Estimate 2 minutes per general slide
- Good oral communication can be learned.
- Practice is essential.
- Forgive yourself.
- Enjoy yourself!
For more teaching tips, visit our website!

http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu
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