Improving Presentation Style

A TEACHING CENTER WORKSHOP FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN MATH

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An Effective Presentation

Communicates
Persuades
Captivates
Planning a Presentation

**Audience**
- Who is your audience?
- What do they know?
- How many?

**Content**
- What should your audience learn?
- How can your content help them learn?

**Structure**
- In what order?
- With what level of detail?

**Methods & Tools**
- Lecture
- “Change-ups”
- A/V Aids and other Technology

**Communication Skills**

**Performance Skills**
Structure: Help Students Learn

- Prepare and distribute an outline
- Tell a story
- Provide concrete examples
- Provide connections among sub-topics
- Explain “big-picture” concepts as well as details
- Include pauses for “Change-Ups,” brief assessments
Limits: Time and Attention

- Students listen between 25 – 50% of the time
- The typical attention span is 15-20 minutes
- People remember only 20% of what they hear and 50% of what they see
Methods: “Change-Ups” and CATs

- Ask students to
  - write a question
  - write or answer an exam question
  - solve a problem
  - write a “one-minute paper”
  - identify the “muddiest” point or the most important idea


Communication Skills

- Speak clearly, loudly, and with varied pitch and speed
- Avoid filler words ("um," "you know")
- Express ideas concisely
- Repeat and rephrase key ideas
- Use gestures and facial expressions
- Make eye contact with entire class
Performance Skills

- Have a “presence”; develop a persona
  - Interact with students
  - Use the room as a stage (move around)
  - Show enthusiasm
- Eliminate distracting mannerisms
- Practice using visual aids and technology
- Be able to laugh at yourself
Creating Visual Aids

Purpose
Clarity
Simplicity
Discussion

What are the pros and cons of using presentation software?
More Tools and Methods

- Chalkboard or white board
  - Students will write with you
  - Write big enough for students at back of room
  - Start at upper-left and work down

- SMART Board

- PowerPoint (keep it interactive)

- “Clickers”
Answering Questions

- Anticipate, prepare for, and welcome questions
- Listen to the entire question before answering
- Rephrase the question
- Answer honestly and concisely
- Be gracious; thank the questioner
Gather Feedback to Improve

• Ask faculty, colleagues, peers, students to give you constructive feedback

• Take notes on how it went and what you might do differently next time
Key Concepts

1. Know your audience
2. Focus on communicating with that audience
3. Prepare and practice
4. Learn and improve
For Additional Ideas and Assistance

Visit The Teaching Center Web site:
http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu

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