

Presentation Skills

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“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



Reference: *Engineering Education: Preparing for the Next Decade*.
Study by Arizona State University, December 1991.

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

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- Good oral communication can be learned.
 - Practice is essential.
 - Forgive yourself.
 - Enjoy yourself!

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