

Criteria for Evaluating Presentations

Content:

- Is solid information presented?
- Is it the right amount of information?
- Is the information appropriate to the assignment?
- Are topics and examples related to everyday interests of the audience?

Organization:

- Is there a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Is the opening strong, with a clear statement of the topic and overview of the presentation contents?
- Are the main claims well-supported?
- Are forward and backward anchors used?
- Is the ending strong and conclusive?

Delivery

- Does the speaker stand straight and not fidget?
- Does the speaker make eye contact with the audience?
- Does the speaker appear prepared?
- Does the speaker seem enthusiastic about the topic?
- Does the speaker project competence and confidence?
- Are visuals used effectively?

Visuals

- Can visuals be seen easily from everywhere in the room?
- Do visuals use key words instead of sentences?
- Do the visuals help the audience follow the presentation?
- Does the speaker discuss the visuals without simply reading them to the audience?
- Does the speaker maintain contact with the audience while discussing visuals?

Questions

- Did the speaker announce a policy about questions at the beginning?
- Did the speaker initiate and terminate the question and answer period?
- Did the speaker repeat and clarify all inaudible or confusing questions?
- Did the speaker listen to the whole question before responding?
- Did the speaker respond to the whole group rather than just the questioner?
- Did the speaker use the question period effectively to further the purpose of the presentation?
- Were questions plentiful and interesting?

Suggestions for presenters:

ORGANIZING THE CONTENT

- Structure the presentation with a clear beginning, middle, and end. In general, expect to get across no more than three main points in a short presentation.
- If you're using visuals (see below), consider their integration into the presentation from the beginning.
- Begin by clarifying the purpose of the presentation, telling the audience what will be covered and anticipating the main conclusion(s).
- Organize information by importance (relevance to purpose) and relate topics with explicit transitions and summaries. Introduce each main point with a single thesis sentence that summarizes it.
- Conclude with a concise summary of each point and a reminder of your overall purpose.
- Connect your presentation with the interests and concerns of the audience.
- Decide whether to answer questions throughout the presentation or only at the end and make that policy clear at the beginning. It's up to the speaker to open and close a question-and-answer period. (Another effective strategy can be to begin by soliciting questions from the audience. Don't try this unless you're sure that your presentation will answer them.)

POLISHING THE DELIVERY

- Start strongly—listeners lost in the first minute may never be recaptured. A good introduction catches the attention of the audience and leads easily into the main subject matter. An anecdote can relax the audience and make them more receptive, but speakers uncomfortable with anecdotes can get to the point immediately. It's poor practice to begin with an apology or statement about being nervous.
- Make the presentation easy to follow by using forward and backward anchors.
- Stop when you're done! A good conclusion is short, forceful, and conclusive. Plan it carefully and stick to it. False endings and rambling finales undermine audience confidence.

- Face the audience, stand straight, don't move your arms too much or keep your hands in your pockets. Don't speak too fast.
- Make eye contact with members of the audience.
- Be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is the single most important quality to project in effective public speaking. If the speaker doesn't seem to care, no one else will.

RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS

- Anticipate possible questions and be prepared to answer them. Being able to respond well to unrehearsed questions enhances credibility. Respond to questions enthusiastically: a lack of questions suggests an unengaged audience.
- Listen to the whole question before answering, even if you think you know what the question is.
- Repeat or paraphrase the question unless it's clearly audible and comprehensible to everyone. Questioners often ask multiple questions or questions with more than one component; it's a good idea to separate these clearly and answer them one by one.
- Avoid engaging in dialogues with individual questioners. Assume that others have the same question and address the entire audience when you respond.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so and offer to find it out. If someone else can answer, direct the question to that person.
- Don't panic if you need time to think or check your notes. The moment will seem longer to you than to anyone else.

USING VISUALS.

Both within and outside the university, many presenters use visuals routinely. Some subjects can hardly be conveyed without them. Visual aids range from handouts and chalkboards to transparencies, slides, and sophisticated computer-generated presentations. Encourage interested students to explore possibilities.

Using visuals has three big advantages: the audience remembers more, complicated information is made easier to grasp, and the presenter's organization is reinforced.

The basic "rules" of using visuals are:

- Keep them simple. Use key words rather than sentences. Anything not referred to will distract the audience's attention, as will unnecessary detail.
- Give each visual a title.
- Make sure visuals are clearly visible from all parts of the room. (If they aren't, ask people to change seats before you begin.)
- Know your equipment. Make sure in advance that it's positioned right and working and that you know how to use it.
- Address the audience. In discussing transparencies, point to the screen rather than the transparency and look at the audience. Point to the screen from the side, without reaching across it or across your own body. A pointer helps.

- Beware of diminished audibility while changing slides or overheads, or when looking at and pointing to material in visuals.
- Cover information until you're ready to display it and don't leave a visual on the screen after it's been discussed. Turn the projector off to focus attention when making a strong point or concluding.

DEALING WITH STAGEFRIGHT

- Know that you're well prepared. Rehearse at least twice, before a live audience if possible or in front of a mirror. You can also record your presentation to review and revise. But don't rehearse to the point of memorization. At most, memorize key lines and phrases.
- Remember that the first minute is usually the worst. Once you get going, your nervousness will probably disappear.
- Think well of the audience. Assume that they're interested in the topic and want you to do well. Your nervousness is probably not apparent to them. (They think you're the expert.)
- Dress comfortably and conservatively. How you look affects your confidence and the audience's perception of you.

Presentation Feedback

Presenter:

Title of presentation:

| | poor | | | | excellent |
|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Content | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Organization | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Delivery | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Visuals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Overall | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments: