

## Individual Conferencing

Whenever you deliver a presentation to your fellow students and professor, it is but natural that you may wish to hear feedback from them though you might have already judged your presentation yourself. In fact, feedback helps you in understanding the positive and negative aspects of your presentation and enables you to perform better in subsequent presentations. However, many of you may not like your feedback, especially the negative one to be discussed in front of others. Your professor may also like to discuss the feedback with you independently.

**Individual conferencing** refers to the meeting and discussion between the teacher and the student. It serves as a forum for both to discuss feedback, concerns, anxiety, suggestions for improvement, etc. In the context of professional or technical presentations, **individual conferencing** helps you enormously to achieve more effectiveness in your future presentations. Always consider this tool as a boon because your professor may bring out both positive and negative points of your presentation in terms of your planning, structure, style of presentation, verbal and nonverbal cues, audience reaction, visual aids, answering questions, etc.

### Individual Conferencing essentials for Teachers:

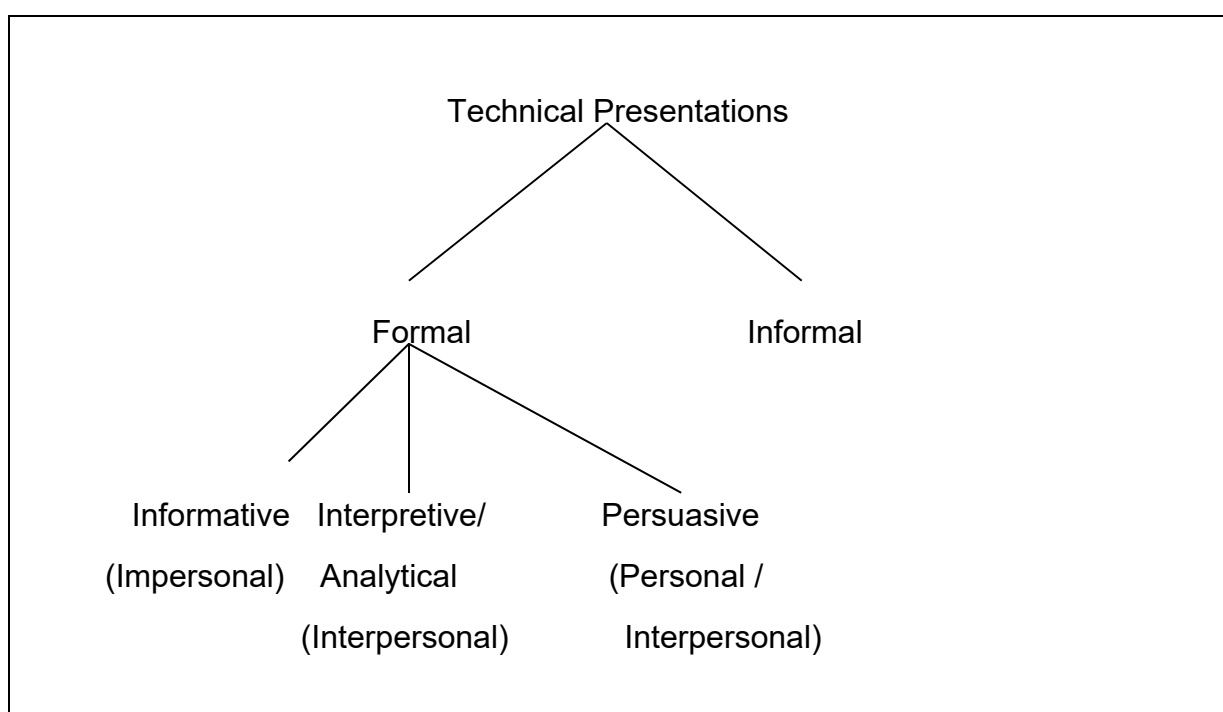
- Have a clear and plan and result that are specific to each student's goal. For example, if students feel nervous during their presentations, the meeting should aim at identifying the reasons for nervousness and suggesting some measures to overcome the same.
- Inform the students beforehand the time, venue and objectives of the conferencing.
- Create a stress-free environment for the students to discuss the issues. Only when students are allowed to discuss their concerns freely, they would be able to open up for discussion.
- Always bring out the positive points first so that students feel encouraged to discuss further.
- Ask pertinent questions to elicit the student's self-feedback on specific aspects of their presentations
- While bringing out the negative aspects, make the students realize not only the aspects but also how they had lessened the impact of your presentation. For instance, your teacher may discuss with you the inappropriate postures or gestures that you had exhibited and how they acted as barriers to your communication.
- Assure the students that they could approach you for further guidance whenever required.

## Individual Conferencing essentials for Students

- Go with the intent of enhancing your presentation skills.
- Have a clear idea of the positive and negative aspects of your presentations according to your own assessment. Note them down to discuss each.
- Go with an open mind to accept and discuss the points of criticism.
- Trust your teachers and respect their comments and suggestions.
- Always believe that the individual conferencing would help you perform better.

## Methods of Presentation

Technical presentations can be classified as depicted below:



As you are concerned with formal presentations, let's look into the types in some detail with some examples:

**Informative / Impersonal:** These presentations aim at sharing formal / technical information with the audience.

*Examples:*

A presentation to a team of visitors on the infrastructure facilities on your campus

A presentation on the statistical data depicting the number of research scholars of your department with their research topics, period of research, etc

When you look at these examples, you may realize that the audience are provided with some information so that they can get an insight into the details of infrastructure pertaining to academics, research, sports, etc., (OR) the department profile related to research.

While delivering informative presentations, you need to be impersonal. In other words, you need to be dispassionate and unbiased without exhibiting your feelings or emotions. You need to just present the information in a matter-of-fact style focussing on facts and facts only without giving your views.

### ***Interpretive /Analytical / Interpersonal***

These presentations move one step further ahead of informative types. They not only present information but also the speaker's analysis on the information. Here, the presenters discuss their views with the audience and get their inputs on the analysis or interpretation.

#### ***Examples***

A presentation on the reasons behind the dwindling enrolment of students in a particular university

A presentation on the trends pertaining to the applications for graduate studies abroad

As against the informative presentations discussed earlier, interpretive presentations involve interactions with the audience. They are interpersonal in nature because they encourage participation from audience in order to get their views. Interpersonal presentations are generally delivered to a small audience because the speaker seeks their individual attention. Such presentations also consume more time than the impersonal presentations that can be delivered to a large audience. Here too, the speakers need to adopt a factual style and be open minded to the views of audience.

### ***Persuasive / Personal***

Besides impersonal and interpersonal presentations there may be occasions where you may deliver a presentation to persuade your audience to agree your point of view. Such a presentation would also be fact-based but you may use persuasive words such as you, agree, instantly, sure, because, consider, innovative, etc., in order to make your audience believe that you are presenting the correct point of view.

#### ***Examples***

A presentation to get your technical proposal approved by a committee

A presentation to your prospective employer about your achievements

Persuasive presentations may also be interpersonal in nature because of the interactions you may have with the audience in order to create a bond with them.

## Quizzes and Interjections

You would have attended many presentations and noticed that the presenter had invited questions after the concluding remarks of his presentation. These are referred to as quizzes. Members of the audience may ask questions; give comments or suggestions to the speaker on the topic he had presented.

At times, one among the audience may interrupt the speaker during his presentation. He may ask a question, raise a doubt or pass on some comment. Such interruptions are called interjections.

Both quizzes and interjections are to be handled very effectively and efficiently by you as a presenter.

Given below are few **guidelines** pertaining to questions and interjections in the context of technical / professional presentations:

- Inform the audience clearly in the beginning of your presentation itself whether they can interrupt you during your presentation or they can ask questions only at the end. In addition, tell them to keep their questions brief and focussed on the topic. If possible you may also add how many questions you may take up because of the time limit.
- If you allow them to interject, answer quickly and concentrate on the rest of your presentation. It is better to take up the questions at the end.
- If some of the audience take too much time frame the question or keep on speaking without focussing on the question, you must be smart enough to interrupt them and phrase the question yourself (e.g. From what I have heard so far, I think you wish to ask how I had arrived at this data. Am I right?) and start answering.
- You should be able to distinguish between questions and comments/ suggestions. If questions are asked, answer them. If comments are given, agree or disagree giving brief justification.
- Do not allow one person to dominate. Ensure that many of your audience get a chance to ask questions.
- Be polite in interrupting somebody, answering certain simple questions, accepting positive comments, handling negative comments, etc.
- Use appropriate body language: posture, gesture, facial expressions, etc., while answering questions.