**Week 5 (Oral Presentation)**

**This lesson covers:**

**1. Visual Aids**

**2. Verbal and Non-verbal Communication\**

**3. Handling Questions Effectively**

**4. Overcoming Stage Fright**

**5. Language Tips**



a) What can you do to make your presentation stand out?

b) What are the visual aids one can use to supplement his/her presentation?

c) In your opinion, what causes stage fright?

**1. Visual Aids**

Visual aids are powerful tools in a presentation. Words and images presented in diverse formats add power to your spoken words, as they appeal directly to your audience’s imagination. Besides, visual aids also help to improve audience’s understanding and memory, serve as notes, provide clearer organisation, facilitate greater eye contact and motion by the speaker and add to speaker credibility.

There are many types of visual aids. They may be grouped into the following eight types:

**a) PowerPoint slides**

**b) Video clips**

**c) Pictures**

**d) White/black boards**

**e) Paper handouts**

**f) Artefacts/ models/ props**

**g) Flip charts**

**h) Infographics**

**General Guidelines in Preparing Visual Aids**

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| * **Keep your audience in mind and keep things simple**   - It is easier for the audience to understand simple visual aids than complex  ones.   * **Proofread thoroughly**   - Bear in mind that even a small error can weaken the credibility of your  entire presentation.   * **Fonts should be clear and easy to read**   - Use appropriate font size and style. Decorative fonts are not recommended.   * **Coloured fonts and background should be appropriate**   - Avoid using too many colours.   * **Include only necessary information**   - Do not crowd your visual aids with too much information. |

**General Guidelines in Preparing Effective PowerPoint Slides**

Microsoft PowerPoint is one of the most commonly used visual aids in presentations. The following are some guidelines for making the best use of PowerPoint.

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| **ELEMENTS** | **DO’s** | **DON’T ‘s** |
| **Text** | * Font size should range between 18 and 48 according to importance of the information * Use fonts that are easy to read * Leave space between the lines of the text * Use keywords or statements, NOT sentences | * Do not crowd the information (no more than six words to a line and six lines to a slide) * Do not use all uppercase letters as they are difficult to read and will appear to your audience that you are yelling * Do not use abbreviations |
| **Colour** | * Limit to two to four colours/ shades * Use colours that will stand out and will be easy on the eyes | * Do not use multiple colour schemes * Do not use dark colours on a dark background |
| **Images** | * Include only one to two images per slide | * Do not use too many graphics |

(Adapted from: <http://news.stust.edu.tw/User/news_file/20160331155319_2.pdf>)

**2. Verbal and Non-verbal Communication**

**i) Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication happens when messages or information are exchanged through vocal expression. There are several common vocal features that you should take note of when you deliver a presentation.

The following are the verbal communication features:

**a) Volume**

**b) Rate**

**c) Intonation**

**d) Pitch**

**e) Vocal Interferences**

**f) Pauses**

The descriptions of each vocal feature are given in detail below:

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| **Volume** | * It refers to the loudness or softness of a person’s vocal tone * You should project your voice by not speaking too softly so that the audience can hear you clearly * Nevertheless, you should not shout to your audience as it sounds rude. * Change the volume of your voice according to the acoustics of the room |
| **Rate** | * It is the speed at which a person speaks. It could change the perception of your audience regarding your topic * When you are talking about something exciting or familiar, speak a little faster * When you want to create a serious mood or if you want to emphasise something, speak slowly |
| **Intonation** | * It is the variety, melody or inflection of a person’s voice * Variation in the level of voice and pitch can be used to distinguish statements from questions, or to indicate the emotions of the speaker |
| **Pitch** | * It refers to the highness or lowness of a person’s vocal tone * The use of different pitch levels could express different meanings and emotions * A small range of pitch levels could make us sound monotonous * Thus, you should vary your pitch to help you deliver your message more effectively. |
| **Vocal Interferences** | * Words or sounds that interrupt fluent speech * This involves the use of fillers such as ‘uh’, ‘umm’ or ‘you know’ which do not convey meanings. |
| **Pauses** | * Refer to temporary stops in a presentation * Pauses can help you recollect your thoughts * You can have some pauses before you begin your speech, when you want to move from one point to another and when you want to show emphasis |

**ii) Non-verbal Communication**

It describes the process of conveying meaning without using any words. Therefore, non-verbal communication cuts across spoken and written words, allowing messages to be delivered in a subtle way.

Below are examples of non-verbal communication/ cues:

**a) Facial expressions** (example: raising eyebrows)

**b) Body contact** (example: shaking hands, tapping the shoulder)

**c) Eye movements** (example: squinting)

**d) Hand movements** (example: pointing, waving)

**e) Posture** (example: shoulders hunched)

**f) Appearance** (example: creased shirt)

**g) Ways of speaking** (example: speed, emphases on words)

**h) Closeness** (example: sitting next to someone)

**i) Sounds** (example: whistling)

**General Guidelines of Non-verbal Communication**

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| * **When sending messages** * Be mindful of the non-verbal behaviour you are displaying * Adapt non-verbal behaviours to your purpose * Adapt non-verbal cues to the situation * Align non-verbal and verbal cues * Eliminate non-verbal behaviours that distract from the verbal message * **When interpreting others’ non-verbal cues** * Be mindful that most non-verbal cues are not clear * Consider cultural, gender and individual influences when interpreting non-verbal cues * Pay attention to all non-verbal communication cues and their relationship to verbal communication |

Here are some body language guidelines for making a presentation professional and effective. Awareness of the elements is an important step towards success as a presenter.

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| **Hand movements** |
| **Positive Approach**   * Keep your arms open and at a certain distance from your body to give a message of peace and confidence to the audience * Try keeping your arms in front in an open manner * Use your hands to explain your point of view through calculated, concise movement |
| **Negative Approach**   * Too much hand movement can be distracting * Hiding, clasping or keeping your hands in the pockets indicate that you are nervous and not confident * Crossed arms portray a very defensive posture that signals a distance between you and your audience |

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| **Eye contact** |
| **Positive Approach**   * **Always consider making eye contact with audience when delivering a point** * **You can make it short but do not be too quick** |
| **Negative Approach**   * **Looking at your watch, feet or even at the screen, rather than at your audience, signals a lack of confidence. This can make your audience lose interest in your presentation** |

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| **Posture** |
| **Positive Approach**   * Aim for a neutral position, sitting or standing tall as if a string is connecting your head to the ceiling |
| **Negative Approach**   * Slouching conveys the message that you are not serious or professional during the presentation |

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| **Body Movement** |
| **Positive Approach**   * Move with a purpose * It is also important to not stay in one place, so moving through the entire crowd can send a positive message |
| **Negative Approach**   * Pacing back and forth is distracting and can make the audience feel restless |

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| **Smile** |
| **Positive Approach**   * Begin your presentation with a smile and your audience will receive your message more willingly |
| **Negative Approach**   * It is advisable not to smile when you are presenting content of a more serious nature (death, honour killing, etc) as it creates confusion among the listeners. |

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| **Physical Appearance** |
| **Positive Approach**   * Dress smartly where both men and women should wear formal and appropriate office attire * Wear appropriate accessories that are not flamboyant and distracting * Keep your hairstyle simple, tidy and smart- this includes neat facial hair for men * Light make-up might be appropriate for women |
| **Negative Approach**   * Wearing clothes that are too tight or overly loose * Wearing noisy clothing or accessories that distract your audience every time you move * Wearing shirts with sayings on them that may appear offensive to any member of audience |

**3. Handling Questions Effectively**

A short question and answer(Q&A) session is commonly present after a presentation. Most presenters fear the Q&A session as they may face difficulties in dealing with questions effectively. However, Q&A session is a vital part of the presentation as it allows the audience to seek clarification and consolidate learning. It is advisable for presenters to take the Q&A session as a formal part of the presentation, and be fully prepared for it.

**General Guidelines on Effective Handling of Questions**

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| 1. **Anticipate some common questions** that you may possibly be asked and practise answering them. 2. **Make eye contact** with the questioner and listen to the entire question before you give an answer. This ensures that you do not miss out any details. 3. **Nod** while the person is talking to show that you understand the question asked. 4. **Politely request the questioner** to repeat or explain the question if you do not understand it. 5. **Repeat the question** to the entire audience to verify it for the benefit of the audience and to give you more time to formulate a response. 6. **Deliver the answer** to the entire audience and keep your answer **simple and brief.** 7. **Stay calm and confident** even if you do not know the answer to a question. **Be honest** and tell your audience that you are unsure. Say that you will look into it and that you will get back to them. 8. Provide a brief answer if something that has already been mentioned is asked. Do not attack the questioner for not paying attention. 9. **Stay professional** even if the questioner is trying to ridicule you. |

**4. Overcoming Stage Fright**

Glossophobia or stage fright refers to the fear of public speaking. It is a phobia that many people have when they are required to speak in front of large groups of people. A degree of nervous apprehension may be felt as early as the preparation stage. Some people may feel it during practice. Others only feel it on the day of the presentation or when they are presenting. Their self confidence could be affected because of their fear of public speaking. Hence, it is important to find ways to overcome the fear.

**Stage fright symptoms**

* Stiffness
* Shallow breathing
* Stuttering
* Fear of forgetting speech
* Sweaty palms
* Furrowed brow
* Shaking/trembling voice
* Upset stomach
* Racing thoughts
* Nausea
* Embarrassment
* Feeling incompetent in fulfilling task
* Dry mouth
* Pounding heart
* Cold
* Shaking hands and legs

**General Guidelines to Overcoming Stage Fright**

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| 1. **Prepare** as **early** as possible so that you are familiar with your content. You can speak more confidently if you are familiar with what you are going to talk about. 2. **Practise and rehearse** your speech. You should practise whenever possible to get the content internalised. 3. **Be positive**. Do not focus on your fear and anxieties but keep telling yourself that you can do it. 4. **Do not reveal** to anyone that **you are nervous** because your audience might not be aware of it if you do not tell them about it. 5. **Avoid having negative thoughts** such as ‘I cannot do this’ and ‘I am so afraid of this’. As they could reinforce our fears and make us further doubt whether we can really do it. Thus, we need to avoid thinking negatively. 6. **Communicate** with your audience and **avoid memorising** the speech prepared word for word. 7. To avoid forgetting your speech, it might be useful to **prepare cue cards**. As you will have to keep the points in your cue cards brief, the cards allow you more freedom to interact with your audience. You do not have to rely on the cards word for word. 8. You can **do a mock presentation** in front of your friends to get their immediate feedback on your weaknesses. 9. **Use visual aids** to reduce your anxiety. Drawing your audience’s attention to a visual could reduce your nervousness and give you time to collect yourself. 10. **Prepare a back-up** plan for unexpected technical problems. |

**5. Language Tips for Presentation**

Using the appropriate language forms and functions during your presentation is important as it helps to create an impact.

Some examples of expression that can be used during your presentation are given below.

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| **Greetings** | * Good morning/ afternoon, ladies and gentlemen * Hello everyone * It is great to meet all of you here * Thank you for being here today |
| **Introducing a subject** | * I would like to say a few words about… * I am going to talk about… * The subject of my talk is… * Today, I would like to share with you… |
| **Presenting the structure** | * My presentation will be in… parts * First, … * Finally, … * In the first part, … * Then in the final part, … |
| **Indicating a policy on questions or discussion** | * Please interrupt if you have any questions * After my talk, there will be time for discussion |
| **Summarising** | * I would like to end by emphasizing the main points * In a nutshell, I have covered… * In summary, I have talked about… |
| **Concluding/ Call for action** | * What we need is… * I think we have to… * I think we have seen that we should, … * We must… |