

Thursday: Team Week Presentation

Tomorrow, teams will give a presentation and demonstration of their applications to staff and students. Determine how you want to present and demonstrate your work. Each team member may speak or a spokesperson may be designated for the group. Presenting technical content is something we will be doing many times throughout our time at Moringa School, and tomorrow is an opportunity to practice those skills and improve.

Review this lesson for a general structure for technical presentations, as well as guidelines to follow when putting presentations together.

Presentation Structure

Each group should plan to spend ~5 minutes covering the following information:

- Team Members - Who worked on the project?
- Project Name and Objective - Why did you choose this project? What purpose does it fulfill?
- Demonstration - Show and describe the features of your work.
- Process - Describe how the team development process worked in your group.
- Challenges - Share the biggest technical challenges you faced.

Also, allow a bit of time for any questions your audience may have.

Please review the next sections in preparation for presentations.

Subject Knowledge

- Give a clear explanation of the problem statement and have a deep understanding of each part of the presentation - be able to elaborate on and defend every point that you make (you never know what the audience will ask)
- Think carefully about what message you want to send. Assume that the audience knows very little and then give them all the information they need to know about your project. Give explanations that make sense to all skill levels, defining terms if necessary.
- Be able to justify the decisions and technicalities of your application
- Be able to answer audience questions truthfully and comprehensively without hesitation.
- Do not refer to your work as a “project” - it sounds juvenile and unprofessional. Use “application” or “product” instead.

Organization and preparedness

- Present the information in a logical, interesting sequence that is easy to follow.
- Transition smoothly from one stage to the next. Avoid awkward pauses in between stages and group members.
- Be sure to rehearse as a group to establish chemistry between team members

- Respect the time limit set aside for the presentation and makes good use of time.
 - The secret to keeping time is to time yourself while practising so that you understand how long each part of the presentation actually takes.
- All group members should speak during the presentation.
- Make sure all group members are equally prepared.
 - If one group member speaks clearly and confidently while the others do not portray the same quality, the difference is easily noticeable by the audience.
- When preparing for presentations, make sure you are conversant in each part of the presentation even though you have allocated specific parts of the presentation to different team members. You never know what unexpected challenges may arise, and a group member may not be available for the presentation.
- Dress the part - wear something smart and presentable on the day of the presentation.
- Practice: build confidence and make the presentation sound effortless.
- Ensure that the equipment you will be using for example a projector or a laptop is working.
- Double check to make sure that your project is complete and fully functioning: all links are working, and everything matches well with the information you are communicating.

Mechanics

- Slides are a must-have for presentations
- The content on the slides should support your presentation and reaffirm the message. They should contain images, graphics, and key points.
 - The slides should not replace the presentation. In general, they should not contain a lot of text.
- Review and revise your slides prior to the presentation and make sure they are free of grammatical errors. Even small errors can indicate carelessness and unprofessionalism.
- Graphics should be clear and portray accurate information related to the presentation content.

Presentation Skills

No matter how your presentation is structured, your presentation skills can have just as much, if not more, of an effect on how your presentation is received by the audience. Review this section for information on how to deliver a presentation effectively.

Body Language

- Movements and gestures should be natural and not look rigid or rehearsed.
- Stand or move naturally. Don't be stiff. However, don't move too much. Do not pace. Do not dance or stand like a statue. Repetitive movements, such as swinging your arm or pacing, are distracting to the audience and makes you seem unconfident.
- Your body language should be in sync with the presentation and help the audience understand the message.

Poise

- Your demeanor should be relaxed and portray self-confidence.

- At times, no matter how prepared you are, mistakes happen - the important thing is that you recover from them effortlessly so that the audience does not take notice.
- Being confident has a lot to do with managing your stress levels. If you feel particularly nervous and anxious, then those emotions will probably show. The audience can detect if you're nervous, which can take away from the impact of your presentation. A little nervousness is useful because it can build energy, but that energy may quickly turn negative if nerves build to the point where you can't control them. If you have anxiety before a presentation, try some of these stress management tools:
 - Take a few deep breaths.
 - Visualize yourself delivering a successful presentation.
 - Build your self-confidence by:
 - Rehearsing! Rehearsing! Rehearsing!
 - Simplifying your speech to make it short and simple
 - Acting confident even if you do not feel it, stand upright!
 - Taking slow, deep breaths through your nose, filling your belly.
- Smile, but not too much. Not only does smiling make you look more relaxed and confident to the audience, it actually makes you more relaxed and confident.

Eye Contact

- Hold the attention of the entire audience through steady eye contact and focus.
- Make sure that you hold the attention of everyone in the audience. Shift your focus to different sections of the audience from time to time instead of looking at one section throughout the entire presentation.
 - If you only pay attention to one part of the audience, the rest of the audience may not feel included and stop paying attention to the presentation.
- Avoid referring to notes or slides - your attention should be on the audience.

Enthusiasm

- Show that you are excited and have positive feelings about the product you're presenting. When you love what you're doing, the audience feels excited about the subject as well.

Elocution

- Speak slowly - unnaturally slowly, even - especially if you talk fast habitually. Listeners are absorbing a huge amount of information, and need extra time to process what you are saying.
- Pause from time to time. A pause is powerful, it forces the audience to pay attention, forces you to slow down, and gives you time to gather your thoughts.
- Speak clearly. With practise, even a memorized script can become more natural and interesting.
- Project your voice and use precise language with clear and correct pronunciation.
- Use appropriate tonal variation and speed while talking to make sure your message is heard.
 - Avoid using a defensive tone when answering questions from the audience. Assume that the audience is genuinely curious and has valuable feedback to offer.