

Giving Effective Presentations

坚持-热爱-专注 ◇

1 Before the presentation

Determine the type of speech delivery you are giving. The type of speech delivery influences the strategies you will use to practice the speech. The four types of speech delivery are:

Impromptu

A speech that has no advanced planning or practice.

Extemporaneous

The speaker prepares notes or an outline, with embellishment. This kind of speech allows the speaker to adapt to the audience's reaction and sounds more natural and conversational than scripted speeches.

Manuscript

Reading a scripted speech word-for-word without any memorization.

Memorized

Memorizing a scripted speech to present without having to rely on reading the script.

When thinking about how you will deliver your speech, consider:

Articulation

Find the right pace for your speech in order to retain clarity and be easily understood by your audience.

Nonverbal communication

This can include posture, eye contact, facial expressions, and movement that can be used to reinforce or modify your speech.

Effective voice

Strive for a conversational, casual voice at a volume that your audience can comfortably hear even if they are listening from the back of the room or through a digital platform like Zoom.

Below are some simple steps to take in practicing for your speech or presentation:

Practice your stance

If you will be standing while presenting your speech, then practice while standing. If you'll be seated, practice while seated. If you'll be on Zoom, practice to see what stance will work for your camera.

Speak out loud

It can be tempting to recite quietly when preparing. But reciting your speech at a similar volume to the volume you will use to present in class is another effective method of practice.

Practice without looking at the text

Even if you are not required to memorize your speech or presentation, practicing without looking at your text to see if you lose your train of thought.

Make your script easy to read

If you are planning on reading your speech from a script or notecards, format the words to make them easy to reference while you are presenting. Try these formatting tips:

- Use a large font (14 pt. or greater) for text and numbering your pages.
- Leave blank lines between paragraphs or sentences so you can easily find your place.
- Refrain from stapling pages together or printing double sided, which makes your pages more difficult to organize during the presentation.
- Highlight words or lines that are important to you to ensure you deliver them during the presentation.
- For in class speeches, copy down presenter notes on paper from any PowerPoint or presentation slides in order to refrain from staring at a screen during your presentation.

Record yourself and listen to the recording

Recording yourself provides a way for you to gain an outside perspective of your presentation. Create a list of items you want to improve upon for your next trial run and practice again.

Ask yourself questions

The next step in building confidence in presenting is to evaluate your progress in being precise. Ask yourself:

- Where did I have trouble speaking clearly and/or emphatically?
- Did I stay within my time limit?
- Do I feel the need to delete or edit anything?
- At what point did I feel the most confident?

Practice in front of an audience

Grab a friend, group member, family member or make an appointment with an Academic Coach and recite your speech or presentation in front of another person. This will help you bounce ideas off of someone and give you the chance to practice in front of people with whom you feel comfortable. For Zoom presentations, go through the mechanics of an actual Zoom rehearsal with another person. This may involve additional steps of preparing the physical space, such as lighting, tidying up, and setting the scene that will be viewable by the audience.

Try the Wonder Woman pose

It may feel funny, but some studies suggest that standing with your legs apart, hands on your hips, and chest out (much like Wonder Woman) for two minutes before a stressful event can build feelings of confidence.

2 During the presentation

When it comes to the day of the presentation, it is natural to experience feelings of nervousness or anxiety, but remember you have practiced for this presentation and be confident in what you have accomplished. Here are some tips on how to calm nerves in the moment and manage anxiety:

Arrive prepared

Make sure you have everything you need to give the presentation. Using your computer? Make sure it's charged. Are you reading off a script or notecards? Pack them with your things the night before.

Breathing exercises

Maintain eye-contact

Try 4-7-8 breathing to slow down and calm the mind and body. Inhale quietly through your nose to the count of four; hold your breath to the count of seven; exhale with sound through your mouth to the count of eight.

This will help you stay engaged with your audience and hold their attention during the speech. The goal is to make eye contact or maintain the illusion of eye-contact with members in the audience at all times you are speaking to them. An effective strategy for maintaining eye contact is to shift your focus between different areas of the audience (room) every few seconds. On Zoom, you can look at your camera to simulate the appearance of eye contact for the audience rather than looking at the faces on the screen.

Incorporate movement

Consider incorporating movement into your presentation. Movement can help support your message, connect with the audience, and dissipate nervous energy. Some tips for incorporating body movement include:

- Moving through transitions. For instance, stand firm when delivering a point, move to a separate place as you transition to another point, and stand firm when delivering your second point).
- Stepping forward when delivering a key takeaway message.
- Walking toward the audience during a participatory part of your presentation, for instance, a Q&A session.

Engage your audience

Present in a way that is engaging through:

- Knowing your audience
- Pacing yourself
- Using a sense of humor
- Starting off strong
- Asking questions or use anecdotes to peak interest