Presentation Skills

Know your audience
- Are you speaking to specialists or non-specialists?

Tips for communicating to non-specialists
- Make analogies and comparisons, define technical terms, use more visuals, explain more clearly/in more detail the motivation for your work, have a very clear take-home message
- Non-specialists are not stupid, they are just people who are not familiar with the specialty

An introduction is very important!
- An introduction simply means anything that is not the main technical part of the presentation
- It should last 30 seconds - 3 minutes.
- Make a good first impression – get your audience's attention
- Classic introductions:
  - give a clear example that encapsulates the whole meaning of the presentation
  - say something topical which relates with what you want to say
  - give the audience some very interesting information (statistics)
  - say why you think the audience will be interested in what you are going to say

…and so is a strong conclusion
- Pointers for your conclusion:
  - Your voice should go down at the end = I know you're finished
  - That's all/I'm finished is *not* a conclusion
  - End with confidence and be ready to answer questions

Remember to use transitions
- Between sections of your presentation so your audience does not get lost
- Have clear transitions between speakers if you are working in a group

Use your body language to engage your audience
- Use calm, natural gestures; relax and smile
- Don't turn your back
- Look at everyone, don't stare, don't read the slides or talk to your notes.

Use your voice effectively to engage your audience
- Do not go into 'presentation mode' - just speak like you normally do – be interested in your topic!
- Avoid speaking too fast, with a monotone, or for too long

Prepare and practice your talk

- Avoid improvising and saying 'er'
- Pause/breathe instead of saying "er"
- Speak in short sentences - no more than 15-20 words.

Keywords are key!

- Make a list of your key words and make 100% sure you can pronounce them
- For non-key terms that you cannot pronounce replace with synonyms you can pronounce.
- Use the same keywords/technical terms throughout your presentation – consistency is key!

Spoken language

1. Speak in short sentences and be concise

This gives you natural pauses – good for emphasis

We needed to make a comparison of x and y.
   = We needed to compare x and y.

There is a possibility that X will fail.
   = X may fail.

The user decides his/her settings.
   = Users decide their settings

The activity of testing is a laborious process
   = Testing is laborious

Another thing we wanted to do was = We also wanted to
In this picture I will show you a sample = Here is a sample
Regarding the analysis of the samples, we analyzed them using = We analyzed the samples using

2. Use verbs rather than nouns

Makes your sentences shorter, more dynamic, and easier for the audience to understand.

X is meaningful for an understanding of Y
= X will help you to understand Y

When you take into consideration
= When you consider

This gives you the possibility to do X
= This means you can do X./This enables you to do

3. Use the active voice

Use the active voice, say: "we developed the method", not the passive form: "the method was developed"

4. Avoid generic quantities and unspecific adjectives

Replace generic quantities such as some, a certain quantity, a good number of with a precise number.

I am going to give you a few examples = three examples

We have found some interesting solutions to this problem = four interesting solutions

5. Occasionally use emotive adjectives

If you tell the audience you were "excited" about something, they might become more receptive!

Good adjectives to use: exciting, great, amazing, unexpected, surprising, incredible

6. Choose the right level of formality

There are essentially three levels of formality:
1. formal
2. neutral/relatively formal (preferred for your presentation)
3. very informal

For neutral/relatively formal:
- Personal pronouns (e.g., *I, we, you*)
- Active forms rather than passive forms (e.g., *I found* rather than *it was found*)
- Verbs instead of nouns where possible
- Short simple sentences rather than long complex ones
- Avoid informal language (~~I'm gonna, I wanna~~: I am going to, I want to)

ORIGINAL formal style

The scenario is a typical wireless network, in which there is a single base station in the middle and subscriber stations around it. We used a simulator in order to understand how the power-saving mechanism influences the performance of the users in addition to calculating what effect it has on the environment. It is also worth noting that, testing can be classified in different ways on the basis of the part of the network being tested and how testing is performed.

REVISED relatively formal style (shorter sentences, personal pronouns and active voice, repetition of key words, use of verbs over nouns, structure with use of first, second)

The scenario is a typical wireless network. There is a single base station in the middle and subscriber stations around it. We used a simulator to help us understand two factors. First, how the power-saving mechanism influences how users perform. Second, the effect that power saving has on the environment. Another important aspect. Testing. Testing can be classified in different ways depending on which part of the network you are testing and on how you are doing the testing.

7. Avoid quasi-technical terms

Use more direct words, easier to pronounce as fewer syllables

Original
Engloids are communities gathering scientists of homogeneous thematic areas. They produce and/or consume documents of different types, using different applications and hardware resources.

Revised
Engloids are communities of scientists who study the same topic. What happens is that these scientists need to write documents and correspond in English such as in papers, presentations, emails, referees' reports. And to do this they use different applications and hardware resources.

Adapted from:'English for Presentations at International Conferences' by Adrian Wallwork (2010)