

# Guidelines for Professional Presentations for Student Presentations

## Effective Professional Presentation Skills

### Body Language

1. **Dress professionally.** Dress like you are giving this presentation at a national conference of international experts, or assume your mother will see the video of this presentation.
2. **Face your audience.** Position your body so you can see the whole audience without moving your head significantly. You can move around, and use your hands to emphasize points, but focus on your audience.
3. Audience focus: **maintain eye contact with audience** for the majority of the presentation, not with computer screen, not with the projection screen or speaker notes. You can see if people are nodding off, looking confused, or want to ask a question and take action. If someone nods off, ask them a question.
4. **Ignore the camera, if being recorded.** Just pretend it isn't there.
5. When you do need to point to something on the screen, do so quickly and re-orient yourself back to facing the audience.
6. **Display high energy.** Be enthusiastic. Don't lean on the podium or other furniture. Stand up straight. Holding on to the podium to keep your knees from knocking is allowed. Especially, don't prop your chin on your hand.

### Speaking Clearly

1. **Clear and understandable speaking.** Speak at a reasonable pace, not too fast or slow. Use inflection to maintain interest.
2. **Project your voice.** Volume needs to be adequate for the entire room to hear you. If voice is soft or the room is huge, use a microphone. Do not mumble.
3. **Talk to the audience.** Not the screen, the camera, your notes, or yourself.
4. **Use professional language.** Avoid idioms and slang. However, explain medical terms and avoid acronyms for the lay audience.

### Audience Involvement

1. **Involve the audience.** Ask questions and wait for audience to respond. Call on individuals. Plan small group activities to break up talk if long.
2. Utilize **progressive disclosure** effectively for case presentations with heavy audience involvement at each step.
3. When audience members answer questions, like provide items for the DDx in a case presentation, **repeat what they say** so that the entire audience can hear and **write audience**

responses on a white board or flip chart if available.

### Practice

1. If giving a group presentation, **rehearse as a group** to do the following:
  - a. **Check timing** of presentation
  - b. **Provide feedback to each other** on things like:
    1. Looking at the projection screen too much
    2. Talking too fast
    3. Mumbling
    4. Reading from their notes or the projection screen
2. If doing an individual presentation, rehearse the presentation with a friend or faculty member who can give you feedback.
3. **Rehearse without your PowerPoint** until you are not dependent on it to prompt you as to what you say next. The slide show is not the center of this presentation; you are.
4. **Rehearse with your PowerPoint in the classroom.** If possible, project your slide presentation in the room where you are giving the presentation and check it out for readability from the back of the room, color contrast, clarity of images, videos, audio, and so forth.

### Giving the Presentation

1. **Introduce the topic and all of the speakers** to the room. I don't care if we all know you.
2. Next, **state the objectives** or give an overview of the presentation.
3. **Motivate.** State the rationale for learning the content of this presentation--incidence and prevalence, cost to society, and/or use a case presentation.
4. **Present** the material
5. Include a slide with links to **major web sites** for further information, patient education resources, decision support tools and pertinent clinical practice guidelines on your topic.
6. Give a **review** at the end of the most important points.
7. **Assess** audience understanding of material presented. **Audience Response Systems** work well for this. Use sample test questions from the material. TurningPoint slides add significant time to a presentation. Reduce the content so that the response slides do not make you run long.

## Use of PowerPoint

1. Appropriate **font sizes** for presentations for visibility
  - a. Titles - **32 point minimum**
  - b. Text in bulleted lists - **20 point minimum**
  - c. **Be consistent.** Use the same fonts for titles and for body text throughout the presentation.
2. Appropriate **colors** for visibility
  - a. **High contrast** for rooms with ambient light
  - b. Best is dark background with light letters
  - c. Light background with dark letters OK
  - d. Use the same background/design throughout
3. Appropriate **composition** for **one slide**
  - a. Keep one major concept per slide
  - b. Keep slides simple, not too busy, balanced, and keep a border in case the data projector cuts off parts of the slide.
4. Appropriate use of **text** (Rule of 6)
  - a. Slides should be an outline of talk – not every word you plan to say
  - b. Put whole talk in speaker notes only
  - c. Keep to 6 lines per slide – 6 words to line
  - d. Quotations are OK full text. Otherwise, no full sentences
  - e. Delete articles (the, a, an)
  - f. If concepts can be illustrated with images/visuals, use them instead of words
5. Appropriate use of **images**
  - a. For histology slides, anatomy, x-rays, CT scans, MRIs, etc. **use one image per slide** enlarged to almost fill the slide so the audience can see pathology clearly from the back of a large room.
  - b. **Draw arrows** to point to places on the image to draw attention to them. Animate the arrow.
  - c. **Do not enlarge small images.** They blur. Find a larger image (640 x 480 or more)
  - d. **Do not distort the image.** Use the corners to resize the image or hold down the shift key as you resize an image. It maintains the ratio of length to width.
6. Appropriate use of **Videos**
  - a. If using YouTube, check internet connectivity and audio prior to session.
7. Appropriate citation of **references**
  - a. **Credit all images** below image telling where you got them if not your own
  - b. Credit **author, date** and **title** of article and journal on slide in small print at bottom (18 pt OK for citations only) when reporting research results
  - c. References on last slide in either APA or AMA format (see <http://www.med.fsu.edu/informatics/research/arch.asp>)
  - d. [www.MDCConsult.com](http://www.MDCConsult.com) is not a reference. Author, date title of book, journal, article, or monograph, with date and then the URL.
8. Appropriate use of **animation**
  - a. Animation should enhance, not distract
  - b. Animation should not make the presentation run long
  - c. Use subtle animation to show concepts, sequence, or focus audience but only if time, Custom Animation on selected slides. Do not use Animation Schemes.
  - d. Use same **transition** between all slides
9. Appropriate **file size** for presentations posted to server/Blackboard
  - a. Keep posted PowerPoint file size below 2-3 M for easy, quick download from Blackboard or other websites.
  - b. Compress all images in slide presentation to web format (see PPT Help)
10. Appropriate **number of slides** for time allotted.
  - a. Estimate one slide for every 2-3 minutes allotted. Image slides do not take that long. Response slides take 5 minutes per.
  - b. Time yourself so that the presentation does not go long or you have to talk too fast.
  - c. Leave time for questions.
11. Appropriate **handouts** to supplement presentation
  - a. Consider printing useful tables or Outline of presentation instead of slides
  - b. Pertinent articles (or link to these in presentation)
  - c. Annotated Bibliography on topic
  - d. Use printouts of presentation (3 or 6 slides per page) as last resort. Not always best choice. Hard to read.