Giving oral presentation

Oral Presentation Tips

An oral presentation is more than just reading a paper or set of slides to an audience. How you deliver your presentation is at least as important in effectively communicating your message as what you say. Use these guidelines to learn simple tools that help you prepare and present an effective presentation, and design PowerPoint slides that support and enhance your talk.

Preparing an Effective Presentation

An effective presentation is more than just standing up and giving information. A presenter must consider how best to communicate the information to the audience. Use these tips to create a presentation that is both informative and interesting:

Organize your thoughts. Start with an outline and develop good transitions between sections. Emphasize the real-world significance of your research.

Have a strong opening. Why should the audience listen to you? One good way to get their attention is to start with a question, whether or not you expect an answer.

Define terms early. If you are using terms that may be new to the audience, introduce them early in your presentation. Once an audience gets lost in unfamiliar terminology, it is extremely difficult to get them back on track.

Finish with a bang. Find one or two sentences that sum up the importance of your research. How is the world better off as a result of what you have done?

Design PowerPoint slides to introduce important information. Consider doing a presentation without PowerPoint. Then consider which points you cannot make without slides. Create only those slides that are necessary to improve your communication with the audience.

Time yourself. Do not wait until the last minute to time your presentation. You only have 15 minutes to speak, so you want to know, as soon as possible, if you are close to that limit.

Create effective notes for yourself. Have notes that you can read. Do not write out your entire talk; use an outline or other brief reminders of what you want to say. Make sure the text is large enough that you can read it from a distance.

Practice, practice, practice. The more you practice your presentation, the more comfortable you will be in front of an audience. Practice in front of a friend or two and ask for their feedback. Record yourself and listen to it critically. Make it better and do it again.