



## GIVING WORKSHOPS ON ORAL PRESENTATIONS

**When planning a workshop stick to the handout as a guide but don't just read through it.**

- Look through other handouts, for example on coping with anxiety and PowerPoint.
  - Incorporate points from them if relevant.
  - Find different ways of phrasing a point.
  - Look specifically at "List of Questions" and "Checklist".
- Bring in personal examples.
- Prepare visual aids (The PLTC can provide big newsprint paper).
  - Plan for a dorm room or class room: bring tape to attach posters to a wall or board.
  - A poster created for your first workshop can be used over and over again!
- Decide how you want to start the workshop.
  - Quote
  - Cartoon
  - Worksheet with some questions to get them thinking about the topic (ex. How you do practice a presentation? What makes you most nervous?)

**When giving the workshop keep the following main points in mind.**

### INVENTION:

- Emphasize that they should keep it simple. Challenge them to find the following in each presentation they prepare:
  - clear thesis
  - 1 or 2 ideas
  - appropriate repetition
- Remind them to stay in the time limit given. Longer is not better. One does not turn in a 30 page paper if a 15 page paper was assigned. Don't give a 40 minute presentation when a 20 minute one was assigned.

### ORGANIZATION:

- Give examples of how to engage the audience with your first sentence:
  - State your main point:  
"Many environmental groups contribute to the growth of racism. I will be looking, in particular, at two groups and their stances on population control."
  - Pose a question that you will then answer:  
"How did Stalin, the least popular of the Bolsheviks, become leader of the Bolshevik party?"
- Point out that the transition words used in a paper should be used when speaking as well. Words and phrases like "on the other hand," "furthermore," "next," and others orient the listener to whether you are structuring your argument as a contrast, comparison, or chronology.
- Suggest that when using an outline on many sheets of paper or cards, number the pages and clip them together. This way, you can just slide a page to the side when you are finished; it makes less noise and takes less time than flipping the pages over if they are stapled together.

- Stress not to make your visual aids so fancy that they distract from you, the speaker. They should be a supplement to your talk, not give the talk themselves.

**PRACTICE:**

- Suggest that one way to test for clarity is to practice in front of a friend from the class. She can tell you if your argument is clear and easy to follow.
- Stress that no one is totally without nerves before a presentation. In fact, if one was totally relaxed when presenting, one would appear unenthusiastic and boring.
- Stress that they should know how to use the technology in the room in which they will be presenting.
  - Know how to lower the screen.
  - Know how to change the computer from Mac to PC.
  - Save your presentation on the desktop/bring disk in case First Class goes down.
  - Always close out of your email account when running the presentation, otherwise everyone will hear if you get mail.

**DELIVERY:**

Mention the following:

- Volume: remember to breathe so that your voice won't get squeaky.
- Clarity: enunciate, know how to pronounce all the words you are using.
- Variety: if you have a monotone voice then work rhetorical questions and exclamations into the presentation since you normally change inflection when saying those.
- Stress that it is hard to just eliminate fillers during a presentation. You should practice eliminating them from your everyday language before the presentation. (You might ask them how they have eliminated fillers from their conversation.)
- Discuss different ways one can make eye contact:
  - To include most of the room, visualize the room as a M or W. In other words, glance at the back corner the front corner, the middle, the other back and front corners. Everyone will think that you have looked at her.
  - You can make eye contact with various friends. If you have them sit in different parts of the room, it will be easier to scan the room.
  - Don't just make eye contact with the professor, but don't ignore him/her either.
- Remind students not to pace back and forth, sway back and forth, or turn their back to the audience to look at their PowerPoint screen.
- Students should use their full arms when gesturing, not just their hands. Full gestures help you relax your muscles and can help prevent trembling when nervous.
- Suggest that during question and answer periods or starting a discussion they can:
  - plant questions in the audience to get the debate started.
  - break the class up into groups and give them a little time to discuss.
- Encourage students to pick one or two things to work on during their presentation. If they try to work on everything then they will have too much to worry about.