

**Effective Technical Presentations Workshop**

Faculty of Engineering  
UWI, St. Augustine

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**Workshop Outline**

- Moving from Text to Talk
- Creating Effective Visual Aids
- Developing Effective Presentation Techniques
- Putting it all Together



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**Presentation Evaluation Activity**

Take the next five (5) minutes and complete the Self Assessment Handout. (2-1)

At the end of the assessment ask what skills do you need to develop the most :

- Structuring the Presentation
- Delivering the Presentation
- Developing Good Aids



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**Section I**  
From Text to Talk



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**Section I: Moving from Text to Talk**

- Using the Research Project as a guide:
  - Introduction
  - Problem statement
  - Objectives
  - Methodology
  - Major findings
  - Discussion
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations



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**Why create an outline?**

- Aids in the process of presenting
- Helps you organize your ideas
- Presents your material in a logical form
- Shows the relationships among ideas
- Constructs an ordered overview
- Defines boundaries and groups



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### How do I create an outline?

- Determine the purpose of your presentation.
- Determine the audience you are presenting to.
- Develop the thesis of your presentation.



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### Outlining Steps

- **Brainstorm:** List all the ideas that you want to include in your presentation.
- **Organize:** Group related ideas together.
- **Order:** Arrange material in subsections from general to specific or from abstract to concrete.
- **Label:** Create main and sub headings.



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### Four Main Components for Effective Outlines <sup>3.1</sup>

- Parallelism
- Coordination
- Subordination
- Subordination



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Parallelism - How do I accomplish this?

- Each heading and subheading should preserve parallel structure. If the first heading is a noun, the second heading should be a noun. Example:
  1. Choose Desired Colleges
  2. Prepare Application



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Coordination - How do I accomplish this?

- All the information contained in Heading 1 should have the same significance as the information contained in Heading 2. The same goes for the subheadings (which should be less significant than the headings). Example:
  - Visit and evaluate college campuses
  - Visit and evaluate college websites
    - note important statistics
    - look for interesting classes



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Subordination - How do I accomplish this?

- The information in the headings should be more general, while the information in the subheadings should be more specific. Example:
  - Describe an influential person in your life
    - favorite high school teacher
    - grandparent



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Division - How do I accomplish this?

- Each heading should be divided into 2 or more parts. Example:
- Compile resume
  - 1. List relevant coursework
  - 2. List work experience
  - 3. List volunteer experience



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**Section II**  
From Outline to Aids



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**Section II: From Outline to Aids**

- Why Use Visual Aids?
  - They save time and add interest
  - They improve listener understanding
  - They improve listener retention
  - They allow for different learning styles



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## Section II: From Outline to Aids

- Types of Visual Aids <sup>4.1</sup>:
  - Overhead Transparencies
  - 35 MM slides
  - Flipchart
  - Blackboard or Whiteboards
  - Video
  - Computer Projection
  - Handouts
  - Models and Products



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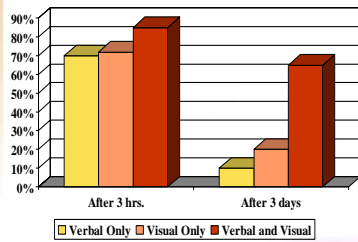
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## Verbal and Visual Recall



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## Guidelines for Visual Aids

- The VA should never become the REASON for the speech
- The VA should be appropriate for the length and format of the speech
- Know what technology will be available to you
- The higher the tech, the more you need redundancy and backup.



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## Font Types

- Serif fonts versus Sans Serif fonts
- Arial is an example of a sans serif Font
- TNR is an example of a serif Font
- ◊ *Avoid Script Fonts*



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## More About Fonts

- Keep fonts clean and simple
  - e.g. Arial for most text and Times New Roman or for titles
  - Don't use too many fonts
  - Limit the use of emphasis
- Font Sizes
  - Use at least 20 pt. for default text
  - At least 24 pt for televised talks
  - If the audience has to work at it, they just will give up



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## Yes, Size Matters

- This is a 18 point font
- This is a 28 point font
- This is a 44 point font
- This is a 54 point font



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### Guidelines for Text

- Use only 4-6 lines of text per VA
- Use phrases, not full sentences
- Use Upper Case and Lower Case for ease of reading
- Leave the same space at the top of a VA
- Limit lines to no more than 40 characters



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### General Slide Format

- Use short, concise "bullets"
  - Employ hierarchical bullets
  - **Do not** use paragraphs or long sentences
- Do not cram too much onto one slide



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### General Slide Format

- Keep It Simple!
  - Visual clutter is distracting
  - Too many special effects are distracting
  - Use animation for illustration, not cosmetics
  - Want them to remember the **substance**, not the **form**



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**Identify the Main Points**

- Assumption: a listener can only handle 5 main points
- Realize that at any time, 20% of audience is thinking of something else
- Repeat the main points 3 times
  - First, them what is coming (Intro/summary)
  - Then, tell it to them (main body of talk)
  - Finally, tell them what you just told them (conclusions)



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**Identify the Main Points**

- Distinguish between main points and details
  - Hierarchical levels of bullets on slides
  - Vocal volume, inflection and pauses
  - Summary slides at beginning and end
- Use images whenever you can



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**Slide Organization**

- Title Page
  - title
  - author
  - affiliation (or course number)
  - Date of presentation
- Outline or Overview
- Main Body of the Slides
- Conclusions or Summary



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### Use of Figures & Examples

- A good picture (example) is worth a thousand words
  - And a bad picture is worth a thousand snores
- Take time to talk the audience through each figure
- Make sure the image is clearly visible
  - Line size is thick enough
  - High enough contrast in colors



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### Match Verbal & Visual Parts

- Time-per-slide
  - Rule-of-thumb: 2-3 minutes per slide
  - Figures generally take longer
  - Rehearse with your actual slides
- Do not verbally "wander away" from your bullets
  - No one will remember a word you said
  - anything worth remembering must have a bullet



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### Match Verbal & Visual Parts

- Point to the slides to change context
- Do not present complex details verbally
  - formulas, equations, statistics, etc. must be visual
  - Beware of information overload!



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**Use of Handouts**

- Slides must be uniquely numbered (increasing order)
- Handout copies of **all** slides **before** beginning
  - Include all slides
  - In the same order and with the same numbering scheme
  - Stapled or bound



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**Use of Handouts**

- Two slides per handout page is eminently readable
- Four to six slides per page **may** be too many
  - Harder to take notes



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**Section III**

Presentation Techniques



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**Objectives**

- Three universal objectives
  - Get the "facts" across
  - Convince the audience of their validity
  - Keep them awake long enough to do the above
- Individual objectives influence the emphasis
  - Should you emphasize "just the facts"?
  - Will you need to do a lot of convincing?



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**Types of Speeches**

- **Memorized Speech:**
  - + allows eye contact
  - difficult for long speeches
  - room for precision errors
  - no room for improvising



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**Types of Speeches**

- **Extemporaneous Speech**
  - + sounds natural
  - has much room for error



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**Types of Speeches**

- **Reading From Text**

- + ensures precision
- does not sound natural
- no room for improvising
- hinders eye contact



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**Types of Speeches**

- **Speaking From Slides**

- + insures organization
- + allows eye contact
- + allows improvising
- some room for error



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**Audience Analysis**

- Who are they (demographically)?
  - Age, gender, culture, educational level?
- What are they?
  - Students, colleagues, engineers, executives?
  - Customers?



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**Audience Analysis**

- What is their knowledge level?
- What are they looking for?
  - What do they expect to learn?
  - How badly do they want to learn it?



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**Pay Attention to the Audience**

- Pick a few people and "talk to them"
  - Make eye contact (keeps them awake)
  - Change victims periodically (keeps them guessing)
  - Cover the whole room



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**Pay Attention to the Audience**

- feedback is available
  - Facial expressions & body language
  - Furrowed brows vs. nodding heads
  - Fidgeting, browsing ahead in the handout, eyes closed
- Adjust your talk to these cues



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### Connecting with the Audience

- Talk, don't read!
  - Take cues from your slides, but do not read them
  - It's OK to check your notes (occasionally)
  - Having notes on the "backup" papers helps
- Make Eye Contact
- Be Pleasant



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### Physical Actions

- Stand up, don't sit
  - Get away from the workstation
  - They can hear you better,
  - Puts you in a physically dominant position



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### Physical Actions

- Don't just stand there, **Move!**
  - A little motion keeps people awake
  - Use hand gestures
  - BUT: don't overdo it.
    - A moving target commands attention
    - Too much motion is a distraction
  - Face the audience
- Point to the screen, **not** the slide!



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**Speak up!**

- Speak loud enough to be heard without effort
- Speak with confidence (watch out for arrogance)
  - Improves your credibility
  - Try to use the lower registers of your voice



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**Speak up!**

- Vary the pitch, volume, inflection
- Develop a rhythm (don't stumble over each word)
- If you have an accent or impediment
  - Slow down!
  - Don't let your volume drop



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**Can I Be "Entertaining"?**

- Using Humor
  - Need the right amount, of the right type
  - Should be relevant to the topic
  - A little goes a long way
    - short relevant stories
    - a little irreverent comment
  - Don't push your luck



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### Handling Questions

- Repeat the question: "The question is ..."
  - So, everyone else gets a chance to hear it,
  - To make sure you understand it
  - To stall while you formulate the answer



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### Handling Questions

- Deferring the question is OK:
  - If you are discussing it later in the talk
  - If it is too complex & peripheral - offer to discuss later
  - If you really don't know - say you will find out for them
- Always follow up on a deferred question



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### References

- Digital Literacy Self Assessment  
<<http://www.jcu.edu.au/studying/services/studyskills/oral/checklist.html>>
- Oral Presentation Self Assessment  
<http://library.bowdoin.edu/honors/oral-comm/3-self-assessment.pdf>



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[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/glo\\_outlin.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/glo_outlin.html)>
- Oral Presentation Checklist  
<http://www.jcu.edu.au/studying/services/studyskills/oral/checklist.html>



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