

BIOL 3116 – Advanced Microbiology – Dr. Sullivan – LSU

Specific things I will look for during the presentation:

- Introduction (Got audience attention, Sufficient/Correct background info, Introduced topic in a clear and organized way, Previewed main points)
- Effective and understandable explanations
- Comprehension and knowledge of the information
- Correct pronunciations
- Effective use of allotted time
- Appearance
- Photos and diagrams
- Effort
- Presentation style (Vocal quality- volume/ enthusiasm/clarity/enunciation, Confidence, Appearance, Originality/creativity)
- Overall organization/development (flow)

General Presentation Guidelines

How do I give a presentation? Believe it or not, there are some similarities between papers and oral presentations – they both have introductions, a take-home message should be given, the "meat" of a talk is mostly discussion and evaluation, and there is a conclusion. However, despite these similarities, an oral presentation does differ in one aspect: a type-written paper can read VERY SLOWLY and ponder a subject, and the reader can read the page over and over and over again until the reader is satisfied that she understands what's on that page – an oral presentation gives the audience everything. For maximum impact, the presentation should be:

- Very well organized;
- Logical;
- Stripped of any details that distract from the take-home message, and
- Delivered clearly and smoothly (this means practice before you come to class...)

Keep several of these ideas in mind, and you will give a great presentation:

1. A talk can only be effective if you **understand your topic**. So, if you have questions COME SEE ME and let's talk about your topic to build your confidence.

2. **Do not simply paraphrase your paper**. To make an effective presentation, you must re-organize the key points and to get rid of stuff that is not necessary for a 10-15 minute time slot. Obviously, if you had an hour, your presentation would be completely different.

3. **Be creative**. Enough said.

4. When using pictures/images/text/tables/etc. from other sources (e.g., from papers or books, or even the internet) PROVIDE the citation on the slides. Just like a paper, you should also cite your sources for oral presentations. If you didn't draw the figure, or make the table, or used someone else's data or information, then you *have* to reference that previous work.

5. You should feel as if you are trying to **teach us about your topic**. In teaching us, as you go through the talk, you should make major points and draw your conclusions as you go. Tell us how the figure fits into the take-home message, or how it doesn't. This is also something that is different from a paper, which typically ends with conclusions. Many people make the mistake of repeating the conclusions at the end of the talk – this is a waste of time that you could be saying something profound or providing some additional, future suggestions.

6. **Act as if you are interested and excited** about what you are saying. No matter how many times you practice, if *you* seem bored during your own presentation, so will the *audience*.

7. Definitely **end on a positive note** – you know a talk was good if you wished that the speaker had more time! This is how you should end – **but don't end too quickly** (to appear as if you just stopped). You should warn the audience that you're near the end: "I would like to make one final point," or "Before I end, I wish to emphasize..." Such phrasings will prepare the listeners that you are ready to end on the up-stroke gracefully, not the down-stroke quickly.

8. Continuing that thought, **be proud of your talk**. Don't end by laughing or saying, "Well, I guess that was it," or "I hope that didn't suck," or "Sorry it was boring," or "Is it over yet?" End by saying something like, "Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions."

9. Know what you are going to say before you get up in front of the class.

Practice. However, **don't memorize** your presentation. Memorizing usually results in rushing or mumbling. And, forgetting what you memorized, without *knowing* what you were going to say, is absolutely disastrous. Everyone will know you memorized your talk and will know that you forgot it!

10. **Don't rush just because you're nervous**. Remember that everyone in the room has to give a presentation and will also be nervous (some more than others). At this stage in your career, being shy might be appropriate at a bar, but you are

getting ready to get jobs – you will be speaking in front of people for the rest of your life (scared?) – ever hear the phrase, "sing for your supper?" Speaking in front of people will be easier if you are confident.

11. By practicing, you should know how long your presentation is. **STAY ON TIME.** Do not go over your time allotted. You will lose considerable respect from your peers (and points) by rambling beyond your time limit. I will cut people off.

12. **Be prepared for questions**, but don't feel compelled to answer something you don't understand well or that you don't know. A simple, "I don't know that answer to that question" will suffice. Obviously, you shouldn't reply with that for every question.

Format: Each student will have 15 minutes. It is recommended that you plan a 12 minute presentation to allow for a minute of buffer time and a couple of minutes for questions.

Evaluation: There are a few things in life that are more disappointing than putting your heart and soul into preparing and delivering a talk to an audience that is so completely disinterested. **The listener also has responsibilities.** Therefore, as an audience member, it is your job to listen closely and to be respectful. Try to formulate at least one question or comment. Obviously, we won't have time for everyone to comment, but you should expect to ask or to comment at least twice. That means you have to be paying attention.