

## CHEMICAL INFORMATION

Fall 2005

Chemistry 396

Instructors: Ms. Ricker, Mr. Thompson

### *Tips for Oral Presentations*

Plan for 10-12 minutes of presentation, followed by 3-4 minutes for questions. Practice your talk ahead of time so you know you can stay within these limits.

1. You know more about your topic than most of the audience. Express that confidence by sharing your knowledge with enthusiasm and energy, in a clear, strong voice.
2. Make eye contact with your listeners frequently, to gauge how well they are following your presentation. Avoid talking at length while facing the projector screen or turned toward the board. Keep projecting your voice all the way through the end of each sentence; there is a natural tendency for the voice level to drop both as you turn away from the audience and at the end of sentences.
3. There is no need to apologize for your lack of understanding of certain technical aspects of the topic; for example, you might state "We do not understand all of the steps of this procedure or exactly how the result is achieved, but it is clearly the preferred method based on our reading of the author's conclusions" and go on to explain your reasoning.
4. Define terms and jargon that are probably new to the audience. Don't assume that all listeners have the same level of understanding of chemical principles. Include more detailed information on your handout and refer to it explicitly, or write terminology on the board.
5. The collaboration of the team must be evident, with each person taking an active and substantial part of the presentation. Explain in advance which aspects of the topic each person will present. One person writing on the board or handling the visuals as the other talks helps the presentation flow more smoothly (switch positions at least mid-way through). Some verbal give and take between the presenters can enliven the presentation, and the informal exchange might help reinforce an important point.
6. Visuals are much more legible if made with bold, dark lines and bigger than the typical printed page; enlarge images and text accordingly. Good visuals help focus a talk and reinforce your verbal message; most people learn better if they can both hear and see the information. Conversely, if your voice is somewhat soft and the overhead hard to read, your listeners must struggle to simply absorb the information and that interferes with comprehension.
7. The first visual should include your research topic question, featured prominently as part of the title of your presentation, names of both presenters, and the date. Next set the context of the topic by presenting background information. Your listeners should become convinced that this is an interesting problem worth investigating. Finally dive into the details of the topic. You should finish with comments on the literature searching that yielded good results. List your set of most helpful references in ACS style on a final slide.

## Recommendations for PowerPoint Presentations

You should use PowerPoint as part of your presentation.

1. The general recommendation is about one visual for every 1-2 minutes, so 8-9 is the maximum appropriate for a 10-12-minute presentation.
2. Plan the slides carefully and try not to make them too busy. Use the slides to present structures, diagrams, or key points only.
3. The material for the slides should be created using the computer, including ChemDraw, Word, and Equation Editor software that you learned in the course.
4. We strongly recommend that you get feedback from either of the instructors before you settle on your slides. Such feedback may be desirable even if you already have met with one of us for a general discussion of your presentation.
5. Prepare a handout (double-sided) of your Power Point slides (6 slides per page). The chemistry department will help you with making the photocopies to distribute to each member of the class before your presentation. This means a total of 14 copies, including ones for you, your partner, and each of the instructors. See Wanda Morris for assistance with this.