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**Tips for Presentations**

Make Your Presentations Great!

*"According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy".*– **Jerry Seinfeld**

Many college students feel nervous or uncomfortable when they have to deliver a presentation. Unfortunately, in college, it's not always easy to avoid public speaking; there often is a broad variety of courses that incorporate presentations and sometimes full-length seminars into the regular class activities. There is no need to panic! Here are some helpful tips that will assist you with your next presentation.

**1. Do your homework**. It is very difficult to give a good presentation without putting in some serious time preparing for it. Many gifted speakers look as if they're just talking off the cuff, saying whatever comes to mind. But, in truth, they've spent considerable time figuring out what they're going to say.

**2. Be organized**. Good presentations are structured in sections. Many presentations need only two or three main points. Always create an agenda for your presentation. Organizing your points into a few main parts and then progressing through those parts in an orderly fashion will help your audience follow along and not get lost.

**3. Do a dry run**. It's always good to do a run-through (or even a couple of run-throughs) before the presentation. This can help with both your timing and your manner of presentation. Be sure to make notes if you went on too long or got nervous or stuck. Some people find it useful to have a friend pretend to be the audience: he or she can build up your confidence and maybe even ask a question or two.

**4. Talk; don't read**. Try to talk from notes, or, if you use a written-out text, try to look down at it only occasionally. It's less important that you capture the text word for word than that you present the main ideas in a natural and relaxed way. (Your practice sessions should help you here, since they enable you to better remember what you want to say.)

**5. Take it slow**. The single biggest mistake inexperienced speakers make is going too fast. Remember that your audience is hearing the material for the first time and isn't nearly as familiar with the topic as you are.

**6. Use aids**. For certain sorts of presentations, visual aids–such as Power Points, handouts, even things written on the board, can help your audience locate and grasp the main points. Just be sure to explain these materials fully in your presentation.

**7. Be yourself**. As important as the content you present is your authenticity in presenting it, so don't try to be someone you're not. Think positive thoughts and envision yourself doing well!

**8. Add humour**. There's no harm in including a little humour in your presentations, this will help both you and your audience relax.

**9. Be interactive!** A short icebreaker, game, quiz, etc. related to the topic of your presentation can hook your audience and relax the classroom, including you! Involve your audience and you’ll find that the room will become less tense.

**9. Acknowledge the crowd**. A very important part of public speaking is to make eye contact with people seated in all parts of the room. That shows the audience that you're interested in communicating with them, not just getting through this experience as quickly as possible. Also, walk around the room a little. Sharing space with the audience can also communicate your interest in them.

**10. Appear relaxed**. You don't have to actually be relaxed–few speakers are–but at least try to appear as relaxed as possible. Bring along some water, take short breaks from time to time, and pause between sentences and main points.

**11. Finish strong**. Always be sure to have a satisfying conclusion to your presentation in which you make clear to the listeners what they now know. Review your main points and summarize the main ideas of your presentation.

**12. Welcome questions**. Be prepared to answer questions either during or after your presentation. It may be a good idea to prepare and anticipate some possible questions. Questions are a good thing; they show that the audience was listening and has engaged with what you're saying.​