

Mechanical Engineering – Technical Presentations

The purpose of technical presentations is to communicate to an audience the results of engineering work such as testing, experimenting, or design. Generally, the speakers should assume their audience has a technical background but that they are unfamiliar with specifics about the subject. A very common mistake is to assume the audience knows more than they do. Try to remember what you did and did not know about the subject *before* you began the laboratory or design work. Be sure to have a good introduction and background to help educate the audience.

ORGANIZATION (CONTENT) Similar to written documents

Introduction/Overview (very general)

- Provides overview (what will you discuss)

- What is the purpose of your presentation

- On the Introduction page, do **NOT** list as follows: “Introduction, Background, Discussion, etc.” – rather be more descriptive. The list should inform what your talk will cover, example: “Types of corrosion, Procedure to determine corrosion in aluminum, etc.”

Background (general)

- Sets the stage, educates

- VERY IMPORTANT** to have a good background!

Main Discussion (specific)

- What did you do

- What were the results

Conclusion/Review (very specific)

- What is the answer?

VISUAL AIDS (MS PowerPoint)

- MS PowerPoint, (projection or overhead)

- Include few words, 4-5 main ideas per slide – should be an **OUTLINE** not sentences.

- Use overheads/slides as queue cards – **DO NOT BRING** queue cards to read!

- Be consistent with capitalization, etc.

- All visual aids should **support** the talk

- One minute per overhead (rule of thumb)

DATA PRESENTATION

- Use graphs rather than tables (generally) – all text must be of sufficient size to be readable. Avoid equations.

- Avoid unnecessary detail, be concise

DELIVERY

- Do not be distractive (no gum chewing, etc.)

- Speak clearly and sufficiently loud

- Use good eye contact (look around)

- Keep within time restrictions

- Practice with a friend, four times