

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS

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Upcoming Events – Mar 2016

- **Effective Presentation Skills** NOW
- **LinkedIn Lab** Mar 23 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm E19-603
- **LinkedIn Lab** Mar 29 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm 1-135
- **MCAT Panel** Mar 29 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm 24-121
- **Practicing a Meaningful Elevator Pitch** Mar 30 1:00pm - 2:15pm 4-237
- **How to Work a Career Fair** Mar 31 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm 1-190
- **Spring Career Fair** Apr 6 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm Johnson Athletic Center
 - Over 80 companies across *multiple* industries
 - Registration now open <https://springcareerfair.mit.edu/#/>

Plus many more workshops during April...check them out

<http://gecd.mit.edu/mit-events>

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS

Intended Outcomes from today's workshop:

We Will Cover

- Self Evaluation...What type of speaker are you?
- Facts and Fears of Public Speaking
- Presentation Blueprint
 - **Structure, Body Language, Verbal Delivery**
- Tips and Other Considerations
 - Myths and Facts
 - Personal Appearance
 - How to Reduce Anxiety
 - Common Mistakes



EVALUATE YOURSELF

What Category Best Describes You As A Speaker?

CATEGORY

CHARACTERISTICS

Avoider

You do everything possible to escape from having to get in front of an audience.

Resister

You have fear when asked to speak. May not be able to avoid speaking, but you never encourage it. When you do speak, it's with great reluctance and pain.

Acceptor

You'll give presentations but don't seek those opportunities. Sometimes you feel good about a presentation you gave.

Seeker

Looks for opportunities to speak. Finds the anxiety a stimulant which fuels enthusiasm during a presentation. Self-confident.

FACTS

Why Are Presentation Skills Important?

- Almost every organization lists communication skills as one of their most critical issues...and presentation skills are a large component of communications
- Presentation skills are crucial to almost every aspect of academic/business life, from meetings, interviews, conferences, to trade shows/job fairs
- Often times leadership and presentation skills go hand in hand

Ability to communicate verbally (internally and externally) 4.63/5.0

#1 Skill Employers Want – NACE Survey Feb 2016

FACTS...cont

Why Are Presentation Skills Important?

- Information by itself is boring, unless it's startling. Conveying it through stories, gestures and analogies makes it interesting
- A large portion of the impact of communications rests on how you look and sound, not on what you say
- Having good presentation skills allows you to make the most out of your first impression
 - Especially at conferences and job interviews

FEARS

Why Are Presentation Skills Important?

- Public speaking is considered the number one fear of most people
- People are caught in the crossfire between their fear and the fact that many employers expect them to demonstrate good verbal communication skills
- Most interviews by PhD's have a presentation component
- Academic interviews always have a presentation/chalk talk
- If your job doesn't demand presentation skills, odds are good that you'll need them in your next job



PLAN YOUR PRESENTATION

Put yourself in the shoes of the people who will be listening to your presentation

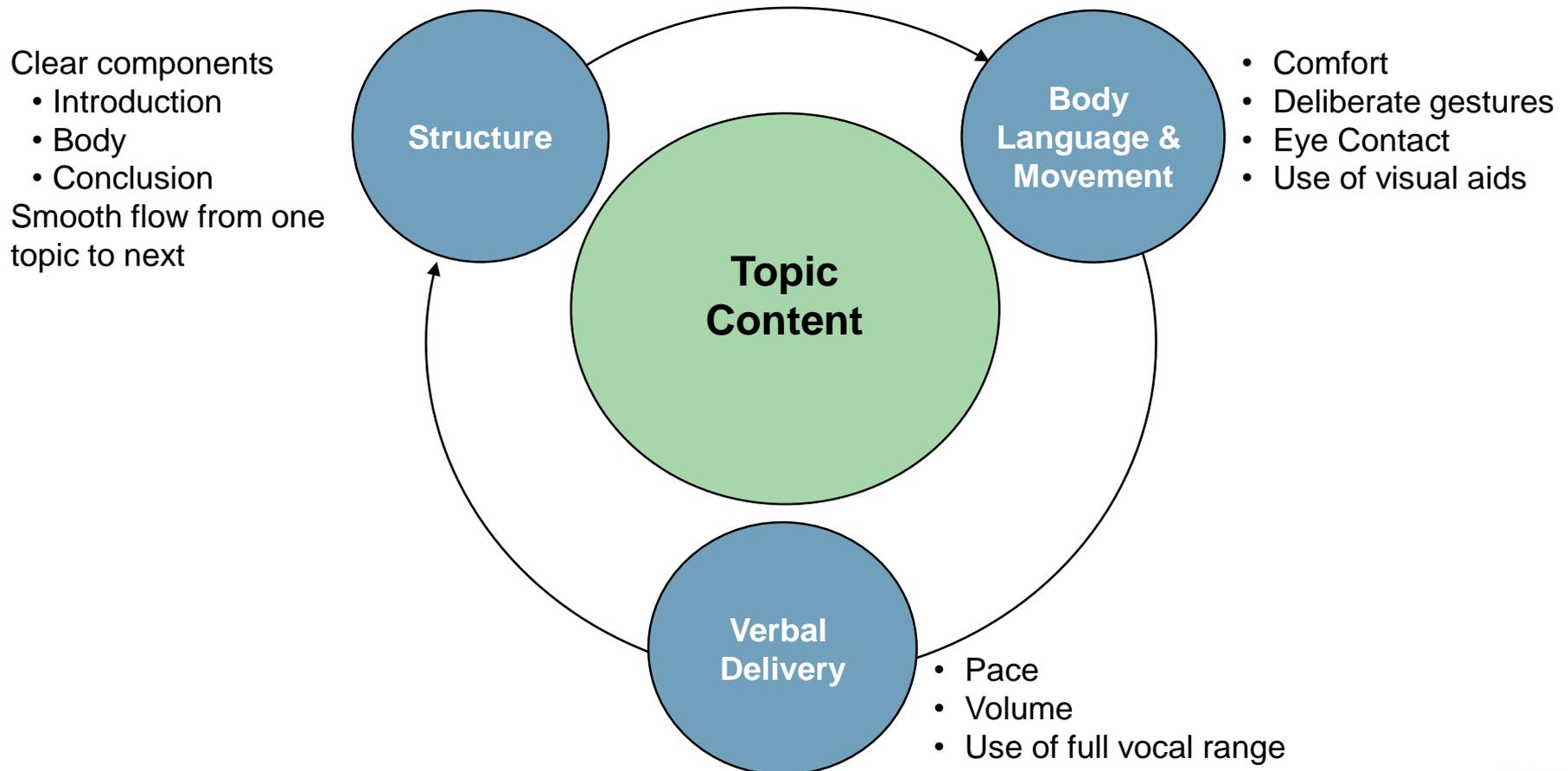
Analyze The Audience

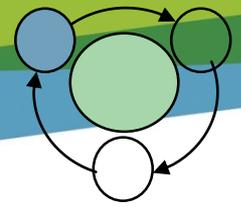
- **Values**...What is important to them?
- **Needs**...What information do they want?
- **Constraints**...Understand their level of knowledge on the subject and target them appropriately
- **Demographics**...Size of audience and location may influence the presentation

3 Key Components of a Good Presentation

- **Structure**
- **Body Language and Movement**
- **Verbal Delivery**

Good Presentations Consist of Three Key Components





Structure

Introduction

- Build Rapport with Audience
- State preference for questions - during or after?
- Set stage: provide agenda and objective – grab their attention
- State the bottom line and your key supporting points

Body

- Deliver your message logically and structured
- Use appropriate anecdotes, examples
 - illustrate key points
 - establish credibility
 - connect with audience

Conclusion

- Restate bottom line and key supporting points
- For Q&A: “Who wants more details?” (not, “any questions?”)
- Prompting for questions: “A question I often hear is...”

INTRODUCTION: Start With The Objective

Who am I?



Provide your name, role, function

Why am I here?



Declare objective, set expectations

**Why is this important -
WII-FM: What's In It For Me (for
the audience)?**



**Give audience a reason to listen;
make an explicit benefit statement**

**How will I accomplish my
objective?**



**Lay a road map; set the agenda;
provide an outline of what will be
covered and when**

BODY:

Structure the Presentation to Maximize Delivery

Deliver the Main Idea



Tell audience what you're going to tell them...and tell them again

Transition Well



Move through presentation by using phrases such as; “**now we will review...**” or “**if there are no more questions, we will now move onto...**”

Be Flexible and On Course



If needed, use examples not in presentation to emphasize a point, but don't get side-tracked. Stay On Course by using phrases such as “**let's get back to...**”

Review Benefits and Main Idea



Make sure you have delivered your message and emphasized the main idea or benefit to the audience

Provide Context When Introducing Each Topic

Set the stage:

- *This project was very collaborative and was a cross lab initiative, this is what we did...*
- *The project was multi-disciplinary and we worked with several engineers and scientist, the work focused on...*
- *I led this project and had three Chemist working with me on my team. We....*
- *I led this project team which created a model to calculate the diffusion coefficients and Brownian dynamics of DNA origami structures in collaboration with researchers from MIT and Harvard. We determined...*

Very Effective for Interview Presentations

CONCLUSION: Revisit the Objective and...Provide Structured Closing

Review



Summarize main elements of presentation as they relate to the original objective

“Especially” statement



If applicable, highlight a key point or crucial element for audience to take away

Next steps/call to action



Signal the end is near...**“to wrap up”** or **“to sum up”**. Clearly articulate the next step, action, or practical recommendation

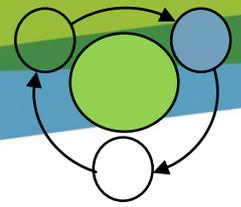
Questions/closure



Thank the audience; solicit questions...ask open ended questions...**“who would like more details?”** or **“a question I often hear is...”**

Key Elements of Non-Verbal Communication

- **Open Body Posture**
- **Eye Contact**
- **Facial Expressions**
- **Gestures**
- **Posture**
- **Space**



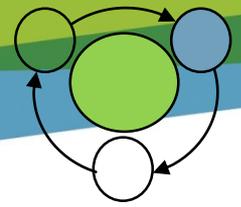
Body Language and Movement

Feet/Body

- Stand firmly and move deliberately. Do not sway or shift
- Move at appropriate times during presentation (e.g. move during transitions or to emphasize a point)
- Stand where you can see everyone
- Do not block the visuals/screen

Hands

- Decide on a resting position for hands (should feel and look comfortable)
- Gestures should be natural and follow what you are saying
 - Hand movement can emphasize your point
- Make gestures strong and crisp...ok to use both arms/hands
- Keep hands away from face
- When pointing to the screen, do so deliberately. Do not wave
- Use **3-T's** Method... **Touch-Turn-Talk**



Body Language and Movement

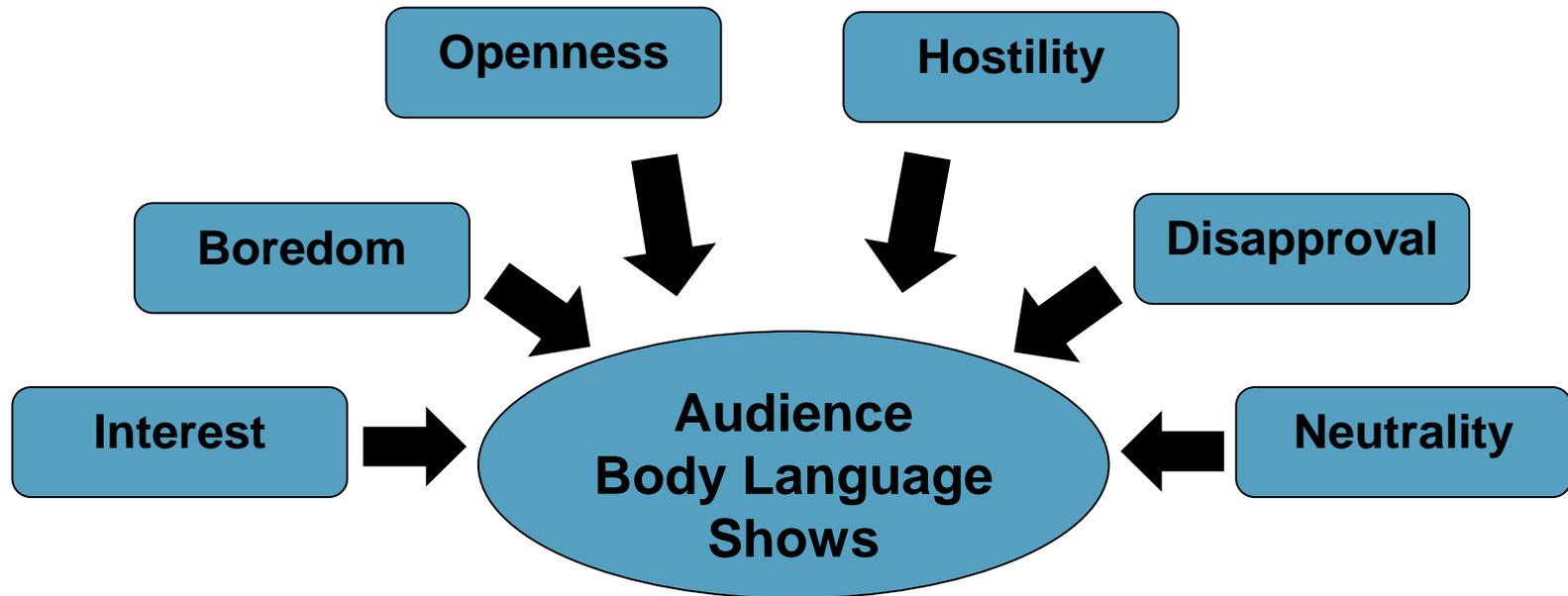
Eyes

- Look at audience's faces, not above their heads
- If an interview or business meeting...look at the decision makers as well as everyone else
 - Vary where and who you look at
- Look at faces for 3-5 seconds and then move on to the next person
- Do not look away from audience for more than 10 seconds
- Looking at a person keeps them engaged

Looking at their faces tells you how your delivery and topic is being received by the audience

Read Your Audience

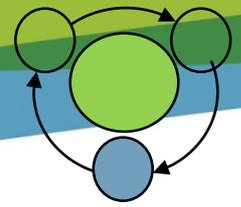
Keep Them Interested



Read Your Audience

Keep Them Interested

- Reading the audience's body language can help you modify the pace of your delivery to keep as many people engaged as possible
- It can also help you to gauge who is in agreement with you, who is opposing your point of view, and who has yet to decide
 - Depending upon the nature of the presentation



Verbal Delivery

Common Faults of Five Critical Elements of Verbal Presentations

1. Volume

- Speaking too quietly

2. Speed

- Speaking too quickly hinders the audience comprehension

3. Variety

- Monotone, lack of expression can create “dull” delivery with little animation

4. Fillers

- Hesitation, excessive pauses, using distracting fillers (“um”, “ah”)

5. Emphasis

- Stress on unimportant words clouds meaning
- Poor phrasing, putting pauses in the wrong places



Tips for Speaking to an Audience

Use spoken rather than written English

- Use active rather than passive verbs
- Avoid technical terms, unless you know the audience is familiar with them
- Always use your own words and phrases
- Cut out jargon

Look at your audience

- Use vocal techniques to catch their attention
 - change pace or volume
 - use a longer than normal pause between key points
 - change pitch or inflection
 - sip water to force yourself to pause
- Audience is a group of individual people
 - address them as if they were a single person

Practice, Practice, Practice

Myths about Giving Presentations

Myth

Good speakers are born, not made



Good speakers take more time preparing and practicing than ineffective speakers

If I follow what someone else says and does, I will be as effective as that person



Other people's styles are useful, but you must present in the way that feels most comfortable for you

People who speak and look confident are not nervous inside



Most speakers experience some type of nervous energy

I do not have enough chances to practice, so I will never feel confident



If you really want to practice, you can find the time

Before I get up to talk, I feel physiological reactions - my heart beats faster and my breathing gets quicker. Those sensations mean fear.



These reactions signal that you are energizing yourself (these are typical of Olympic athletes before they compete). They are normal. You can draw on them to energize you, not immobilize you.

Tips for Reducing Anxiety

Organize

- Knowing that your presentation and thoughts are well organized will give you confidence

Visualize

- Imagine delivering your presentation with enthusiasm and leaving the room knowing that you did a good job

Practice

- All successful speakers rehearse their presentations
 - Either do it alone, with your team, or video tape yourself and review your performance after
- Practice standing up as if the audience was in front of you
- Then practice again

Tips for Reducing Anxiety

Make Contact Before Your Talk

- If possible, speak with the audience before your presentation begins... (not always possible with a large audience)
- Walk up to them, shake their hand and introduce yourself
- Thank them in advance for inviting you to speak today

**Break the imaginary glass barrier between you and the audience
...It relaxes both sides**

Tips for Reducing Anxiety

Make Contact Before Your Talk

Break the imaginary glass barrier between you and the audience

Comment by an MIT Postdoc who went on an academic interview:

“One thing I did, which I think made a huge difference, was to follow your suggestion to break the glass barrier between me and them by interacting with them as much as possible before my presentation. I did so and it worked out great! All of a sudden, they became normal people to me and we simply had a nice conversation about my research.”

Tips for Reducing Anxiety

Breathe

- Inhale deeply several times to stay loose. When your muscles tighten, you feel nervous and it's more difficult to breathe
- Try to clear your mind. Breathe and tell yourself to “**relax**”

Release Tension

- In a quiet area, do an isometric exercise
- Starting with your toes, and working up your body, tighten all of your muscles including making fists. Then release all tension while taking a deep breathe

Tips for Reducing Anxiety

Move

- Speakers who stand in one spot experience tension. In order to relax, release tension and flex your muscles, move in a purposeful manner and use upper body gestures to make points

Eye Contact

- Make your presentation a one-on-one conversation. Build rapport by making it personal and personable. Use words such as **“we”**, **“our”**, **“us”**. Eye contact helps you relax because you become less isolated from the audience

Tips for Personal Appearance

Dress Appropriately

- Avoid distracting the audience / interviewer by:
 - Overdressing / Underdressing
 - Too Much Skin
 - Perfumes / Aftershaves / Colognes
 - Bad Grooming
 - Displaying Tattoos or Body Piercings

Tips for Personal Appearance

Women

- Clothes should fit well, not too tight. If wearing a skirt, hemline should be appropriate for the audience. Generally longer sleeves present a more professional business-like appearance
- Find 2-3 colors that work well for you. Wear good fabrics and make sure they don't make noise when you move. Conservative colors, such as black, blue, gray, and brown, seem to be the safest bet when meeting someone for the first time in a professional setting, whereas colors that signal more creativity may be too loud for an interview. Generally, try to avoid bright reds, oranges, and whites, since these tend to draw attention away from your face.
- Avoid jewelry that sparkles, dangles or makes noise. Use subtle accessories to compliment your outfit. Earrings, broaches and bracelets can distract the audience

Tips for Personal Appearance

Women

- Makeup should be simple and compliment the wearer. Makeup that is well done can control oily areas of the face that might reflect light, and enhance natural features, presenting a more relaxed look
- Hair should add to a positive overall appearance and should not be a dominant feature of the face

“Underscored Elegance”

Tips for Personal Appearance

Men

- Suits should be well tailored. Generally, dark blues, grays and blacks in current styles are the safest bet. Depending upon the audience, a sport coat and well-matched dress slacks are fine
- Men's suits are designed to be buttoned, whereas most women's coats are not. Depending upon the level of formality, you may wish to button the jacket, unbutton it, or remove the coat all together
- Shirts should fit well and the color should not be too bright. Wear a cotton T-shirt and a white dress shirt if you're worried about perspiration...ladies, consider the same

Tips for Personal Appearance

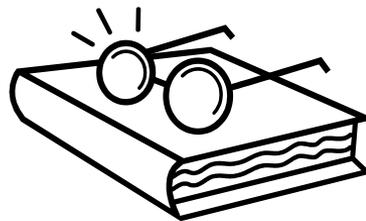
Men

- If wearing a tie, it should compliment the color of your eyes and face. A “power tie” may not work in many settings. More low tones and subtle colors may work better
- Shoes should be appropriate, comfortable and well shined. Socks should match and cover the bare leg when you sit down
- Hair (if any) should frame your face. Beards and mustaches should be well trimmed and above the lip line

Tips for Personal Appearance

Wearing Glasses

- If you need glasses to read the visual aides or to see the audience, wear them. If you don't need them, or wear contact lenses, leave them off. Glasses sometimes reflect light and the audience won't be able to see your eyes.
- Do not wear tinted glasses to avoid reflections. If need be, use an anti-reflective coating which eliminates reflection and glare.



Personal Appearance Reminders

- 55% of the message we send is based upon what people see
- People make snap decisions about us based on what we wear
- It is up to you to manage that impression
- What they see is what you get

Content by The Mitchell Organization

Common Presenting Mistakes

- Talking too fast / lack of pauses
- Reading slides verbatim
- Hovering over the projector / facing the screen
- Standing between the projector and the screen
- Speaking during a transition
- Responding to a question by shuffling through a disorganized pile of slides/papers
- Failing to introduce or summarize the presentation
- Not reminding the audience why they should be listening

Tips and Tricks – Visual Aids



Ensure adequate preparation

- Be completely familiar with the aids, the equipment, and their use
- Be certain everyone can see/hear the aid
- If using transparencies make them readable, brief, simple

Don't overload your presentation

- Rough rule of thumb 2-3 visual aids per 10 minutes



Match your performance to your preparation

- Explain your slides
- Use a pointer rather than your finger
- Never stand between any member of the audience and the screen
- Avoid turning towards the screen to explain a point
- Speak as much as possible to your audience rather than to the aid
- Turn off the projector when the visual is no longer required

The Visuals...continued

Do not talk during transitions

- Will end up talking into the projector
- Brief silence allows audience time to think

Keep slides neat and in sequence

- Will need to refer back when someone asks a question
- The slides are useful way to focus the discussion and to support your key points
- Different audiences call for different slides
- Primary focus should be you and your message, not the slides
- The slides can be handouts so participants remember the presentation

Do not be a slave to the slide presentation

- If instinct tells you to change the order of your presentation or add/delete some information - do it

Managing Your Q&A Preferences

EXAMPLE: Allison dislikes/is uneasy with spontaneous questioning

- **IDEA:** She writes out and practices responses to potential questions. She asks listeners to write down their questions so she can answer them during Q&A time

EXAMPLE: Kerri feels uneasy not knowing her listeners

- **IDEA:** She can greet people as they enter. If that is not possible, she can ask questions by a show of hands to assess people's interests and expectations

EXAMPLE: Chris is easily distracted from his central points

- **IDEA:** He can ask listeners to hold their questions and comments to the end of his talk. Or, he can answer questions between each of his major points

Understand Your Preference

Handling Difficult Questions

- Sometimes you may face questions that are unanswerable. If you feel unable to answer a question it may be useful to have a reply in order to reduce its impact on your presentation
- Sample responses:
 - *“ I need to check with my colleagues before I can answer your question so please see me after the session. I will take your details and get back to you”*
 - *“Let me think about that for a minute. Can we come back to that later? Next question please”*
 - *I don't think that the information necessarily supports either view definitively. However, my personal opinion is...”*

Last Minute Checklist

- Is the room set up properly?
 - Seating - can everyone see the screen?
 - Equipment - do you know how to operate it? Have you checked the focus?
- Are your visuals and other supplies ready?
- Are your notes (if any) ready?
- Have you checked your clothing?
 - Appearance, taken change out of your pockets, zippers in closed position, etc.?
- Do you know what to say in the opening?
- What are your key points of your presentation?
- Do you know how you will close?

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS

To wrap up, this is what we discussed today

- Self Evaluation...Know what type of speaker are you?
- Facts and Fears of Public Speaking
- **Presentation Blueprint...The Main Takeaway**
 - **Structure, Body Language, Verbal Delivery**
- Tips and Other Considerations
 - Myths and Facts
 - Personal Appearance
 - How to Reduce Anxiety
 - Common Mistakes



Have fun!!!

Practice, Practice, Practice

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS

Final Q&A

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us”

Oliver Wendell Holmes

