

## Presenting Confidently to an Audience

### Voice and Pace

1. Speak loudly and clearly—project (don't shout) so *everyone* can hear you.
2. Vary your tone and pace naturally. A monotone = a sleepy audience.
3. Be animated! Your enthusiasm is infectious.
4. People need time to hear and understand what you are saying.
5. Pause for emphasis and try not to fill it with “um,” “uh,” or “like.”

**Don't rush!**

### Eye Contact

1. Look directly at people—eye contact builds trust and connection.
2. Scan the room, spending 2-4 seconds per person. The triangle method works well—right, left, center and so on.
3. Understand that you may want to fixate on one or two people who look back at you empathetically or with friendly smiles—but keep scanning.

**Don't stare at**

the floor or ceiling  
the back wall  
a clock  
the door  
your notes  
your computer

### Body Language

1. Use a neutral, balanced stance and face your audience. You can lean against a desk or sit.
2. Have an open, natural posture.
3. Gesture naturally.
  - a. Avoid big, sweeping movements and repetitive gestures.
  - b. Avoid cracking knuckles, snapping fingers, playing with your rings, or other kinds of nervous “fidgeting.”

**Don't cross your arms.**

**Don't put your hands in your pockets and/or jingle keys or change there.**

**Don't slouch.**

### Movement

1. Move with purpose to
  - a. Engage the audience in different areas.
  - b. Discourage disruptive conversations.
  - c. Transition to different points or structure your ideas.
2. Avoid pacing (like a caged tiger), swaying (like a tree in the wind), or shuffling from foot to foot.

**Don't stand frozen or at “parade rest.”**

**Don't drift aimlessly.**

## Questions and Answers

1. If you ask a question, **give** your audience time to react:
  - a. Understand that you just asked a question,
  - b. Figure out the answer, and
  - c. Determine if they want to raise their hand to answer.
2. Answer your own question only when you've allowed time for people to react and no one seems able to answer. You can also
  - a. Rephrase the question or
  - b. Give them a hint about the answer to help.
3. Let your audience know from the start if you will take questions during your presentation (the better option) or prefer that they wait until the end (generally reserved for really large groups).
4. Be careful how you respond to their answers to your questions:
  - a. Be as positive as possible.
  - b. Never be dismissive.

**Don't** answer your own question immediately!

**Don't** call on someone who hasn't raised their hand.

## Final "Words of Wisdom"

1. Use humor when you can and laugh with the audience.
2. Remember, your audience wants you to succeed.
3. If you make a mistake, own up to it. No one is perfect.
4. If you don't know something, say so. And then find out the answer and get it to interested participants.
5. Technology is fickle!
  - a. Try it out ahead of time, if possible.
  - b. Try to have a backup (i.e., handouts) for really important teaching points.
6. "Old school" doesn't necessarily mean bad (i.e., flip chart or blackboard).
7. Use examples from your own experiences.
8. Practice, practice, practice!!
  - a. In your head whenever you can.
  - b. In front of a mirror.
  - c. In front of family or friends.

**Don't** take yourself too seriously!

**Don't** go in cold!!

***Have fun—you've got this!!***