

# **EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS**

***MANAGEMENT IN STATE GOVERNMENT***

*Participant's Manual*

*Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)*

*State of Louisiana*

# ***EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS***

## **Management in State Government**

### *Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)*

*Sponsored by the Governor's Office & the Department of State Civil Service*

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## **EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS**

### ***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

In this class participants will examine, discuss and practice the basic skills necessary to organize and deliver presentations. The course teaches three areas of presentation skills: (1) the components of organizing a presentation; (2) the interpersonal components of delivering a presentation; and (3) the technical components of several visual media.

Participants will be preparing a short presentation during class and will individually deliver a presentation toward the end of class.

### **JOB OUTCOME**

- ❑ Communicates ideas and facts verbally in a clear and organized way.
- ❑ Adjusts style, tone, and level of verbal communication to fit the audience and situation.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- ❑ Apply presentation skills in the creation of a presentation.
- ❑ Demonstrate effective presentation skills in the delivery of a presentation.

Note: This two-day course provides basic information that will help participants develop and/or improve their presentation skills. It is a participatory class where participants are expected to engage the presenter and other participants in two-way discussions about delivering presentations as an occasional part of their job duties. This course does not cover everything about designing and delivering presentations; therefore this course is centers on the “what-to-do/how-to-do” basics.

### **Individual Activity**

- What: Participant survey:
- Complete the survey
  - Name and date on the survey
  - Return the survey to the instructor

Notes:

## **Introduction**

Delivering a presentation can be difficult, exciting, energy-draining, fun, or all four together.

Remember, your presentation begins in the parking lot.

This does not mean that you start lecturing in the parking lot, rather it means that when you are in the parking lot of the building where you are about to give a presentation, you are as ready as you are going to be – whether you have prepared for it or not.

The single-most important thing you can do for any presentation you deliver is to be prepared.

- Being prepared before your presentation will help you deliver that presentation more effectively.
- Preparation will improve the interpersonal and technical components necessary for a successful presentation.

In other words, *preparation* is the most important thing you can do *before* a presentation in order to do a good job *during* the presentation.

**Group discussion:**

**What:** In your small groups, discuss past presentations you have attended or delivered. Look at two areas: (1) what made a presentation go right *and* (2) what made one go wrong. Be ready to explain why those presentations went right or wrong.

**Focus:** Recall personal experience where you:

- attended a presentation (as part of the audience); and/or
- delivered a presentation.

Notes:

**Organizing a Presentation: Five Steps**

1. Develop the objectives.
2. Analyze the audience.
3. Develop content.
4. Prepare a presentation outline.
5. Develop visual aids, handouts, and notes.

*Note: In this course we will teach all five steps, though the skill practices for Step 4 and Step 5 will be occur after we cover the other components of presentation skills listed on page 3.*

**Step 1: Develop the objectives.**

In order to effectively present information to a group of people, the presenter must understand several things beforehand.

- Purpose of the presentation:
  - What is the key point?
- The results of the presentation:
  - What do I want the audience to understand, learn, or apply *after* attending?

When the presenter knows both of purpose and results of a presentation, he or she has a necessary starting point for a presentation. The presenter now has the freedom to begin to craft his or her approach inside the boundaries of the presentation’s purpose and expected results.

## **Step 2: Analyze the audience.**

Since the purpose and desired results of the presentation are already clear at this point, the next thing to understand is the audience:

- Who is the primary audience for the presentation?
  - The “primary audience” refers to the majority of people who will be there. The key point is to have a rough idea of their knowledge base.
    - Be aware that sometimes the audience has a few people with greater expertise than the majority, as well as a few with much less expertise.
- What do they know already?
  - Part of preparation for a presentation is finding how familiar and experienced the audience is regarding the topic.
- What do they need to know?
  - Is the presentation about new information that impacts them; is it about defining a problem or making a decision; or something else?
- Why do they need this knowledge?
- How can I tailor a presentation to meet the needs of the audience?

Understanding these factors (below) will help answer the questions above:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▫ Internal customers (your own agency)</li><li>▫ External customers (vendors, public, etc.)</li><li>▫ Language or cultural differences</li><li>▫ Educational level</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▫ Job experience/job performance</li><li>▫ Prerequisite skill to make use of the presentation</li><li>▫ Motivation/interest level of audience</li><li>▫ Geographical location</li></ul>
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**Individual skill practice:**

**Preparing your Presentation - part 1**

*What:* Use the beginning of the handout “Preparing Your Presentation.”

*Focus:* Complete the questions on the topic, the objectives and the audience.

Notes:

**Step 3: Develop content.**

Once the objectives of the presentation are established and the background of the audience is understood, the next task is to decide what information will be presented.

- What are my main and supporting ideas that will help the audience understand the topic I am presenting?
- What are the benefits (to the audience) of the objectives of the presentation?
  - i.e., what’s in it for them?
  - How will the audience get something out of the information presented, the topics discussed, the problems defined, the decisions made, or the skills taught in the presentation?
- What types of information can I gather to support the main ideas I will present?
  - Statistics
  - Historical trends
  - Research
  - Pictures (photos, graphics, or other visual components)
  - Quotes
  - Telling a story from past experience

Consider the specific needs you have that, when met, will emphasize the main and supporting points. The following questions may help clarify your content further:

- Do I need to use statistics, trends, budget information, and/or pictures that will offer strong evidence to support these key points?

Examples:

- Details of new mandates or existing policies.
  - Spreadsheets with budgetary or other financial information
  - Complex instructions printed as a paper handout.
  - Photographs, diagrams, maps, drawings, etc. used as part of a slideshow.
- Should I present some of the key points as both a handout *and* a slideshow?
  - Should I make one or more of the key points by telling a story that connects to the audience?

In practice, you may decide to add or delete some content as you finalize your presentation outline (Step 4) or develop visual aids (Step 5). This is a normal occurrence, especially when preparing a new presentation.

**Individual skill practice:**

**Preparing your Presentation – part 2**

What: Use the second part of the handout “Preparing Your Presentation”

Focus: Complete the questions on the main and supporting ideas, benefits and gathering information.

Notes:

#### **Step 4: Prepare a presentation outline.**

This step is centered on **planning how to deliver** the elements of your presentation. In other words, this purpose of this step is for the presenter to plan his or her “marching orders” for the presentation – the sequence of *how* and *when* to deliver the content.

*Note: The details of preparing a presentation outline (Step 4) are below, but the skill practice occurs after the Interpersonal and Technical Components material.*

There are three elements that must be coordinated by the outline:

- Time the presentation so that it has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
  - Introduction (a beginning so it opens well)
  - Body (a middle so it moves along well)
  - Conclusion (an end so it finishes well)
  
- Use visual aids of some type. In almost all circumstances, presentation with visual aids is more effective than a stand-alone monologue. To enhance the effectiveness of delivery, decide where and when to include visuals.
  - Handout
  - Chart pad
  - Erasable board/chalkboard, where available
  - Slideshow
  
- Estimate the time consumption of your speaking sections combined with the time consumption of the other activities in the presentation. Each of these (below) involves audience participation, and each one consumes more time than a monologue:
  - Question & answer period
  - Small-group discussions
    - If you will debrief the small groups so the audience benefits from each group’s discussion, be ready to closely facilitate the debriefing to avoid wasting time.
  - Skill practice activity
    - This is a very effective method to enable the audience to learn to apply knowledge (vs. just collecting knowledge), though it takes time for proper skill practice, and this time consumption must be planned well.

## **Step 5: Develop visual aids, handouts, and notes.**

This step is centered on creating the visuals and handouts that enhance the delivery and effectiveness of a presentation. This step also includes preparing your own notes to use when delivering a presentation. The details about handouts and notes are below. The details of creating slideshows and chart pads are covered later, in the Technical Components material, pages 22-31.

*Note: The skill practice on developing visuals, handouts, and notes (Step 5) will be covered after the Interpersonal and Technical Components material.*

### **Developing handouts**

- Handouts are very effective for increasing understanding and retention of complex information. Some examples are:
  - Maps, pictures, diagrams, and/or charts.
  - Spreadsheets for capital outlay information, budgets, etc.
  - Policies, rules, and guidelines.
  - Strategic and operational plan details.
  - Client forms, PPR documents, etc.
  - Description of a problem (symptoms and causes), alternatives for making a decision as a group, action plans to specify tasks and assignments, etc.
- Handouts should be made available during the presentation.
  - Give the audience the handouts beforehand *unless* you have a reason to distribute them later.
  - Detailed handouts can be linked to a slideshow or chart pad for increased impact during the presentation.

### **Developing notes**

- A presenter's notes for use during the presentation should be limited, i.e., not a script to read.
  - Use index cards with the main points listed to help you stay on track.
  - Use a handout that the audience gets and pencil-in your own notes.
  - When quoting someone, quote only from notes (not memory).

## Interpersonal Components

- Platform skills (including voice and nonverbals)
- Overcoming nervousness
- Transitions
- Handling groups

## PLATFORM SKILLS

Platform skills refer to what you do, physically, when you are leading a presentation.

- You are on “the platform,” so to speak, when you are the focus of attention – even when the platform is the same floor as the audience.

Your platform skills are what the audience sees and hears. During your presentation, they:

- See what you are doing with your body (e.g., standing, sitting, making eye contact, body language, and how you use your hands and arms).
- Hear you speak (e.g., tone of voice, volume of voice, how fast or slow you speak, and when you use a pause/silence.)

## Guidelines for Platform Skills

- If you are being introduced to the class by someone else, look at the speaker when you are introduced.
- Stop walking before you start talking.
  - Walking around while leading a class is better than standing in one place all day, yet it helps your participants focus on your words if you hold still while you are speaking.
- Stand solid (imperfect English, yet still true).
  - Be able to stand, comfortably balanced, when speaking and listening to participants and/or while using any visual media.
  - Wear comfortable shoes.
- Don't turn your back to the participants.
  - Face them as a group when speaking and face an individual when asking/answering questions.

- It's OK to turn away from them when writing on a chart pad or chalkboard, yet turn back toward them when finished writing.
- If using a microphone, practice with it *before* the presentation, if at all possible.
  - Lavalier microphones (very small wireless microphones clipped to your clothes) are more comfortable to use during a presentation and they allow your hands to be free, yet it does take a little time to get used to them.
  - Traditional hand-held microphones are probably easier to use at first, but can become clumsy in a full-day class because you always have to hold on to them.
- Every presenter has his/her own style.
  - Do not copy someone else's style for an entire presentation.
  - You *can* copy small things: a certain approach to a topic; a particular delivery method; a useful phrase or question that is central to getting a point across; etc.
- Be genuine.
  - When telling a story to get a point across, the best stories to tell come from *your own experience*.
  - It is OK to tell someone else's story. This can be done quite effectively, too, but when you use someone else's story, tell the audience that you are relaying a story to them (vs. telling it like it is your own experience).
- Use humor:
  - Many presenters use humor; probably most presenters use at least a little bit of it.
  - Humor is most effective when it is appropriate (not offensive or insulting to participants).
  - Humor is most effective when it is used occasionally (a presentation that is *injected* with humor rather than being *immersed* in it).
    - A presenter who can laugh at him/herself is usually appreciated by participants.
- Be careful about what you eat and drink before a presentation (includes breakfast before a class AND lunch in the middle of the day).
  - If you eat too much for breakfast, you risk reducing your effectiveness as a presenter from being too full for comfort.
  - If you drink too much caffeine, you risk being too jittery and unsettled during your presentation.
  - If you eat too much for lunch you risk lowering your own energy level; some of the participants will already be sleepy after lunch...there is no reason to join them!

### Tips on Using Your Voice:

- Vary the volume of your voice.
  - Be loud enough to hear, yet still emphasizing key points with a bit more volume OR a bit less volume.
  - Your speaking voice should not seem like shouting, though it will have to be louder than a one-on-one conversation.
- Vary your word speed.
  - Normal speech is about 125 words per minute; the class will know you are emphasizing a particular point if you slow down when saying it.
- Use silence and pauses to direct or re-direct participants' attention to something.
  - A pause of 5 or 6 seconds after asking the class a question is the non-verbal signal to them that it is their turn to talk; that you expect them to respond.

### Nonverbal Communication on the Platform:

Frequently, an audience is influenced by what they see as much as they are influenced by what they hear. (Sometimes, *more* by what they see.)

- Eyes:
  - Eye contact for two seconds with different participants in the audience is appropriate.
    - Longer eye contact is OK when answering a question.
  - Eye contact tells people you are listening *and* suggests that they listen to you.
- Gestures:
  - The main thing is to be your natural self.
  - Avoid clutching the podium or other behaviors that draw attention away from the message:
    - Jangling change or keys in your pocket.
    - Playing with a marker, a pen, laser light, or some other object in your hands.
    - Nervous fidgeting, rocking back-and-forth from heel to toe, excessive tension in shoulders and arms, poor posture, etc.
  - When pointing to someone or something, use your “whole hand” instead of one finger.

**Group Discussion:**

**Platform Skills**

*What:* In groups, brainstorm some questions to ask and comments to make about platform skills. Be ready to ask these questions to the class and discuss responses.

*Focus:* Key areas of platform skills:

- Body language
- Voice
- Gestures
- Eyes
- Others?

Notes:

## OVERCOMING NERVOUSNESS

Every presenter gets nervous at one time or another. Some people can use it as energy to help them stay focused. Some are nervous the first two or three times they give a presentation, and then they settle down as they become comfortable with the material. Some are always nervous; it just varies between being more nervous or less nervous depending on the situation.

The difference between the pros and the novices is that the pros have trained their butterflies to fly in formation.  
Edwin Newman

### Nervousness symptoms

- Cold hands
- Cold feet
- Dry mouth
- Increased heart rate
- Shortness of breath
- Wrong words come out
- Speaking too fast
- Shaky voice
- Spine tingles
- Weak knees
- Trembling
- Increased perspiration
- “Butterflies” in your stomach
- General, all-around terror
- Others?

### Guidelines for Overcoming Nervousness

- Recognize that being nervous is normal.
  - Especially for presenters who give presentations occasionally, not as a full-time occupation.
- Preparation – your presentation starts in the parking lot, so be as knowledgeable about the material as you can be.
  - Know the knowable.
  - Control the controllable.
  - Be at peace with the fact that you cannot to know everything or control everything.
- Be ready to say “I don’t know” or “I’m not sure” in response to questions or comments that you cannot properly answer.
- Be smart enough to know when you don’t know something and not to fake it when you don’t.
  - If your presentation is likely to require an expert to answer questions and you are not the expert, have the telephone numbers and Email addresses of the people you would usually contact to get answers to questions.
    - Contact that expert during a break, at lunch, or after the presentation and be sure to give the expert’s answer to the people that asked the question.
- Take a deep breath.
  - Breathe using your diaphragm, not your chest.
  - In other words, when you breathe it looks like your belly is moving slightly in-and-out vs. your shoulders heaving up-and-down).
- Head on top of shoulders, shoulders on top of hips.
  - Translation: use good posture.
  - Keeping your head, shoulders, and hips *naturally* aligned when standing will help you breathe more normally.
  - If your head is not on top of your shoulders, nor shoulders on top of hips, then you are over-using lower back muscles to remain standing; this will make you more tired and stressed than normal.
- Relaxed hands and relaxed arms.
  - This means keeping unnecessary tension out of your hands and arms.
  - You can still use your hands and arms for gestures – no problems there – just do it without over-tensing them.

- Smile and use eye contact.
  - Small, occasional smiles at appropriate times are OK. You do not have to grin all day at a class of strangers.
    - Look people in the eye – not over their heads or at the floor.
  - Eye contact with people in the audience is about the same amount of time you would look at them in an elevator—about 2 seconds. This is normal and natural, and will help you reduce anxiety about where to look and for how long.
- Consider the possibility that the audience wants you to do well.

### Class Discussion:

*What:* What makes us nervous about delivering a presentation?

*Focus:* Practical ways to overcome specific examples of things that lead to nervousness

Notes:

## TRANSITIONS

Transitions are used to do two things – one larger, one smaller:

- (Larger) Move from one topic in class to another.
- (Smaller) Return to a topic after answering a question or comment from the audience.

### How to Use Different Transitions

- Ask questions.
  - Use questions to check for understanding. This is a way for you to find out how ready the audience is to move on to the next topic.
- Movement—yours and theirs. (*Specifically for a training class...*)
  - If your presentation is a training class, the beginning of class is the best time to rearrange participants into random groups. One benefit of this is to make them work slightly outside their comfort zone. Another benefit is that it breaks up any

cliques of “problem participants” early on, and does so without any inappropriate attention being focused on them.

- Your movement: you can move around the room as you change subjects. Often this is done while doing the next item...
- Use media and change the media occasionally.
  - This means changing your delivery from lecture back to the video, or from a group exercise back to the training manual, or from debriefing a group discussion back to the chart pad, etc.
  - Changing media is a good idea even when staying with the same topic.
    - Changing the focus of the audience, occasionally, is a good way to energize adult learners (or at least not de-energize them).
- Give a mini-summary.
  - Closing a topic by providing a short summary of what was just learned. It is also a subtle signal that the topic is ending and you are moving on to another one.
- Refocus the audience.
  - To get the audience back on track from an overly long discussion, a Q & A session, or a disruptive participant, you can say:

“Just before he spoke we were talking about...”

OR

“We’ve spent all the time we can on this question and we need to move on. You and I can talk more about it during the next break or during lunch.”

- Handle resistance with transitions.
  - Understand that resistance is energy.
    - Use audience involvement, especially when resistance comes from an important issue that has more than one point-of-view.
    - Use physical proximity. Walk around and get closer to the resistant person. If his or her resistance is misbehavior, it will be harder to misbehave right in front of you! (But not impossible, so you may have to have a private conversation with that person during a break.)
    - Refocus on the topic (see earlier examples of phrases to use).
    - *(For training presentations and classrooms)* Rearrange the participants into different groups before class. If done before class, this will be more natural than doing it after a conflict.

### Class Discussion:

*What:* What else should we cover about transitions and how to use them?

*Focus:* Practical ways to use transitions to move a topic along and/or handle resistance from the audience.

Notes:

## DEBRIEFING SMALL GROUPS

One difference between an academic classroom and a workplace presentation for adult professionals should be the presenter's willingness to rely on the knowledge, skill, background, and experiences of the participants in the audience.

### Make a Decision about Handling Questions

- Before your presentation, decide if you will take questions at any time or limit them to the end of the presentation.
  - Your decision will be influenced by your presentation's objectives and by the nature of the audience.
- If you take questions any time...
  - You reinforce the audience to participate in the presentation, giving them a reason to keep up and stay interested.
  - The downside is that you risk getting off track (or them getting too far off track).
- If you save questions until the end...
  - You get to control the pace of the presentation and stay on target and on time.
  - The downside is that you reinforce the audience to "shut up" for 90% of the presentation, because you have trained them to become listeners instead of participants.
- Pose *your own questions* to the audience as a planned part of the presentation.
  - Posing your own questions can be built into the presentation as part of allowing the audience to be participants, to learn using something besides passive listening.

- Posing questions can also be spontaneous, as a response to a participant's comment that is off target, incorrect, or too shallow.

### Answering Questions

- Address your answer to the entire audience so they don't feel left out.
  - Conclude your answer on a positive note.
- Be brief, if at all possible. (Less is more.)
- If you do not know the answer, say so, and plan on finding the answer for them.
- Handle audience responses in a positive manner (“...thanks for that...what else?”).
- When the audience is silent after you ask a question, make a soft comment such as, “...this is the part where you say something!”
- Debrief large audiences (40, 50, 75, and up) as well as small (under 40 people). Note that larger audiences may offer more answers, but you may only have time for a few answers to each question, i.e., watch the time on large groups.
- Critique wrong answers positively:
  - “In my experience it works out differently.”
  - “I see it differently; here's why ... other thoughts from some other folks...?”
  - “Perhaps we should agree to disagree (agreeably).”

### Hostile Questions

- Like other questions, address your answer to the audience.
- Do not argue.
- Do not lose your self-control.
  - It is possible that the hostility coming towards you is only because you are a convenient target (instead of being the real cause).
  - Also, remaining calm sends a message that someone else's emotions do not control the choice you make about your own behavior.
  - Sometimes hostility comes from someone who is “un-persuadable” about his or her point-of-view, and is insecure because they may have to re-examine that viewpoint.

**Individual exercise:**

**Preparing Questions for your Presentation**

What: Based on the objectives, audience, and content of your presentation:

- Write one or two questions that are likely to be asked by the audience for that presentation.
- Write one or two questions *you* could ask your audience in order to generate discussion. Use open-ended questions, if at all possible.

Finished? Come to the instructor's table and show him (or her) your questions. The instructor may choose to create a temporary slide from some of the questions to use as examples.

Notes:

## Technical Components

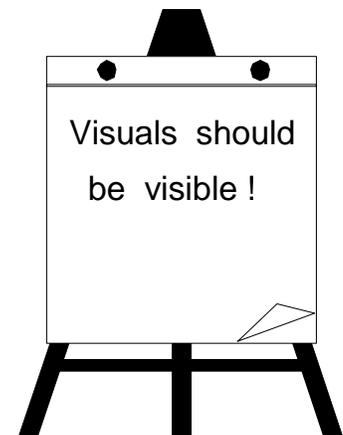
- ❑ Handouts (covered earlier)
- ❑ Chart pads and boards
- ❑ Slideshows

### CHART PADS

Chart pads (easel pads) can be used to round out a presentation by adding a visual dimension that is useful, effective, and low-tech. Chart pads are a visual aid, and fall under the category of audiovisuals, just like overhead transparencies, videos, chalkboards, whiteboards, and multimedia slideshows.

#### Guidelines for using chart pads

- Write letters large enough for the folks in the back of the room to read.
  - Letter should be at least 1.5 inches high and have another 1.5 inches between lines.
- Avoid *cursive* script.
  - Use block printing (upper and lower case letters).
- Use capital letters RARELY.
  - All capital letters is much harder to read than regular sentence case lettering, but using caps for EMPHASIS is very effective.
  - Underline, **bold print**, and/or use color to highlight key words.
  - Use different color bullet points from your text to brighten the chart pad's visual appeal.
- Leave the bottom one-third blank so folks in the back can read it.
  - It may seem that this wastes paper; it is a much larger waste if half of the participants cannot read the chart pad because some of the information on it is too low on the pad for them to see.
- Use chart pad pages to record ideas while debriefing a discussion, defining a problem, brainstorming solutions, etc.



- The presenter (or a participant) can quickly write key words and phrases while keeping the discussion moving.
- Prior to class write topic headings on specific chart pad pages.
  - Use different color markers - one for your pre-written items and one for participants' comments, questions, and ideas.
  - You can prepare a chart pad before class with almost any idea or group of ideas you want to get across, and then you have a ready-made transition waiting for you (so you can 'transition' from one topic to another smoothly).
  - Pencil in notes/numbers - the participants cannot see them - then fill in (or just trace over) the data as you go.
- Flag specific pages with masking tape - especially ones you know you will be return to during the presentation.
- Use the "keyhole" technique to extend contents (cut a hole in one page, covering the page behind it until you want to use it).
- Remember, any visual aid can be overdone – slide shows, chalkboards or chart pads.
  - Chart pads give you another visual aid to use so you do not have to rely solely on slideshows.
- It is useful to be able to do the visual part of your presentation on chart pad alone.
  - A chart pad is a great safety net, in case the projector blows a bulb or your computer crashes.

### Tips for which color markers to use on chart pads

Most of the time...

- For *most* of the information on a page, use one color:
  - Black
  - Blue (deep blue, not aqua or other light blue)
  - Brown
  - Purple (dark purple, not lavender or other light purple)
- Use one of these four colors (see prior page) for text, another one for the bullets, and still another one for words or phrases you want to emphasize.

Some of the time...

- For highlighting text, underlining, bullets, arrows, and other visual emphasizing, use the following:

- Red
  - Orange
  - Green
  - Light blue
- 
- In general, avoid using yellow or other very light colors – you can see them on an 8.5 x 11 page in front of you, but they are nearly invisible on chart pad paper (especially for the participants in the back).

**Class discussion:**

*What:* We will address any questions, answers, and comments from the class about using chart pads.

Notes:

## ERASABLE BOARDS and CHALKBOARDS

Erasable boards (sometimes called grease boards) and chalkboards are another useful, low-tech visual tool a presenter can use to make a presentation more effective. Boards are different enough from slideshows and chart pads to offer a presenter an additional visual aid – which may reduce the chance of boring participants by over-using chart pads or slideshows.

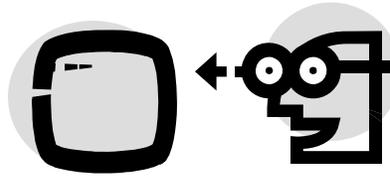


### Guidelines for using erasable boards and chalkboards

- The same guidelines for text size and spacing that apply to chart pads also apply to writing on these larger boards.
  - Like chart pads, use printed upper and lowercase letters; avoid ALL CAPS and *cursive*.
- Chalkboards offer a limited use of color: white or yellow, or both.
  - White or yellow chalk works since a chalkboard is a dark background.
- Erasable boards offer more color choices than chalkboards—the same colors that work on chart pad will work on an erasable board.
  - Be certain that each time you use a white board that you are using dry-erase markers!
- Erasable boards offer more room to write text than a chart pad.
  - The advantage is that you can write longer sentences.
  - The disadvantage is you lose information once you erase it. Unlike a chart pad where you can always return to a page if necessary.

## SLIDESHOWS

For the purpose of this class, a “slideshow” is a PowerPoint file used through a multimedia projector. While this course does not provide specific information about transparencies used on overhead projectors, much of the material we cover on slideshows will apply to overhead projectors as well.



### General Slideshow Tips:

- When not using the slideshow for teaching, kill the image.
  - Use the “B” key when showing a slideshow.
  - An alternative is to use the “blank screen” or “A/V mute” button available on some projectors.
    - Kill the image when not using it in order to re-focus the participants’ attention on you and your message.
    - Otherwise you are competing for attention with 25 to 100 square-feet of brightly lit image (and you will lose that contest).
- Do not turn the projector on and off.
  - Turning a projector on and off repeatedly without letting the projector properly warm-up/cool-down will drastically shorten the life of the expensive bulbs in them.
- Do not look at the screen that the audience is looking at—instead, set up the computer screen so you can see it while presenting.
  - If you look at the same screen, often your back is partially turned, so the audience cannot hear you very well when you speak.
- When your presentation includes a chart or table with complex information, use the full details on a handout and create a slide to accompany the handout.
  - A table or chart on a slide should be a summary of the data on a paper handout, not an exact copy of it.
  - Limit the data on a slide chart/table to 36 items, e.g., a 6 x 6 matrix. Use less than 36 if possible. Break the data into two slides if necessary.

## **Slideshow specifics:**

### **Consistency among Slides**

It is important to keep your presentation consistent from slide to slide. If each slide has a different font style, text size, or background color, participants will be distracted from your message. Serious inconsistencies in slides end up looking more like a ransom note!

- Use one background color (but feel free to change 1 or 2 slides for emphasis).
- Use no more than two colors for your text lettering (title lettering can be a 3<sup>rd</sup> color).
- Use the same font, size, and color for all of the titles in a series of slides.
- Make each slide appear as an integral part of a presentation, not as an afterthought.

### **Contrast Text and Background**

Contrast is important to visually separate the text from the background. The key point is to have a big contrasting difference between the color of the words and the color of the background. Consider the condition of the room you will use for your slideshow -- is it less-than-ideal or ideal?

#### **Less-than-ideal conditions for a slideshow**

White background and black or gray text/images solve most of the visibility problems in less-than-ideal conditions. It is necessary to use a light background and dark text/images to provide enough contrast for the visuals to be visible. Examples of less-than-ideal-conditions:

- No screen at all (using the wall).
- Wall is painted a color other than white.
- Wall has a textured surface.
- Screen has other light showing on it, washing out the projection.
- Screen provided is gray instead of white (newer ones are usually white screens).

***Less-than-ideal  
Conditions***

- **Dark text, light background**
- **Necessary with gray screen or a wall**
- **Great for poor lighting conditions**



#### **Ideal conditions for a slideshow**

A different guideline applies when the projection environment is ideal. Remember that the eye is drawn to light, so when you have ideal conditions, use dark background and light text. Examples of ideal conditions:

- Large, white screen.
- No extra light source shines on the screen (artificial or natural).

***Ideal Conditions***

- **Light text**
- **Dark background**
- **Great for white screen**
- **Great for TV monitor**



- Projector is sufficient distance from screen to allow a large image.
- Text font color is from a different “family” than background color to maximize contrast (i.e., avoid dark blue background, light blue text).

## Balance the Text and Images

Balance refers to whether text and images are centered, left-aligned, or right-aligned.

### Balancing Text

- Centering things is OK for titles and quotes, not text or images.
- Most of the time, text should be left-aligned.
- Text with bullet points is *never* centered (except to show how not to do it).

***Balanced Design***

- Titles can be left-aligned
- *Always* left-align bullets
- Keeps it neat
- Easier to follow



***Balanced Design ??***

- Titles can be left-aligned
- Never center bullet points like this
  - Makes it look sloppy
  - Hard to follow



Left-aligned bullets allow for longer lines of text, therefore allowing a larger font, making words easier to read. Centered titles are fine, but not centered bullets. Centered bullets are too hard to follow.

### Balancing Text and Graphics

- Graphics should be off-center.
- Slides with graphics and bulleted text can be aligned right or left, putting one on one side, the other on the opposite side.
- Aligning text to the right or left of a graphic makes it easy for the eye to follow the bulleted list.

***Balanced Design***

- graphics off center
- more room for text
- more interesting
- easier to follow



***Balanced Design ??***



- centered graphics leave little room for text

## Fonts - Choosing a Style and a Size

The two critical variables in your choice of a font are:

- (1) Font style - what the letters themselves look like;
- (2) Font size - how large the letters are.

### Font style

The two families of font styles divide into whether a style is “serif” or “san-serif.” Examples of each:

Serif fonts	San-serif fonts
Times New Roman <b>Courier</b> Book Antiqua Garamond	Tahoma, <b>Tahoma</b> -bold Arial, Arial Black Century Gothic

- All serif fonts have serifs - the small hooks, curls, and flat spots designed into the top and bottom of each letter.
  - Serifs make it easier to read long lines of small text on paper.
  - *Do not* use serifs for slideshow text - those hooks and curls can be distracting.
  - Serifs *are* OK for titles, if you so choose.
- San-serif fonts are “cleaner” when projected onto a screen and therefore work better as text in slideshows.
  - Use san-serif for bulleted text on a slide - that will be most of the text.
  - San-serifs are easier to read, therefore the audience does not have to use as much effort to read them.

***Serifs are OK for Titles***

- San-serifs work well for bulleted lists
- San-serifs project well
- San-serifs are easy to read



**San-serif fonts are fine for titles also**

- Serifs don't read as well when projected on screens as text
- Serifs can confuse the eye
- Serifs are sometimes too busy when simplicity is needed



### Font Size

If the text on your slide is too small, people can't read it. Period. What is the point of using slides? People are looking at them, that's the point. If there is one key point to slideshows, it is this: Visuals should be visible.

When participants cannot comfortably read the text on a slide, it is like *not having a slideshow*.

### How big is big enough?

The range of font sizes (below) work under a variety of conditions. Use text and titles within these ranges and your slideshow will be effective.

**Titles**            36 - 54 point

**Text**              28 - 48 point

The ranges above are flexible enough to apply to most presentation situations. The final choice of font size for a *particular* presentation depends on the circumstances of that presentation.

- The distance from the projector to the screen affects the image size. Closer to the screen = smaller image.
- The lighting conditions will affect your choice of colors for text vs. background contrast.
- Choice of font style (serif, san-serif) affects image size as well - some font styles appear smaller than others, even when both are set to the same font size.

**Individual skill practice:**

**Preparing Your Presentation - part 3**

*Note:* This skill practice is the practice for Step 4 and Step 5 of “Organizing your Presentation.”

*What:* Use the last page of the handout “Preparing Your Presentation”

- Focus:*
- Brief outline of the Opening, Body, and Conclusion.
  - What visual aids to use and when to use them (slides, chart pad, or erasable board, if available).
  - What content to include on the handout, if applicable.
  - What questions to use to prompt audience response during your presentation, and when to use them.
  - What notes you will use, if any.
  - A rough estimate of your time usage.

Notes:

## RESOURCES

The material in this manual is adapted from these sources:

Creative Training Techniques Handbook (Tips, Tactics, and How-to's for Delivering Effective Training), by Robert W. Pike © 1989, 1992; Lakewood Books, 50 S. Ninth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402.

A Whack on the Side of the Head, by Roger von Oech; © 1983, 1990; Published by Warner Books, NYNY.

Flip Charts: How to Draw Them and How to Use Them, © 1986 Brandt Management Group, Inc. Richard C. Brandt, PO Box 29384 (8423 Freestone Ave.) Richmond, VA 23229, 804.747.0816

A training class developed by the Division of Instructional Support and Development (DISD) at Louisiana State University (LSU) conducted in July 1999 is the source of a large portion of the *Balance* and *Typefaces* sections.

An article by Jeff Burger in *New Media Magazine* (July 1993 issue) is the source for some specifics in the *Consistency* and *Contrast* sections.