ORAL PRESENTATION BASICS - SPECIALIZATION TO TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

“Know your audience”:

- Grad students and research engineers want technical details (i.e. equations), jargon OK
- Technical managers and technical peers want results (i.e. graphs and numbers) and some technical detail, jargon OK
- High-level managers want “bottom line” results or potential (little technical detail), little jargon
- Lay public wants no technical development and almost no jargon

“Purpose”:

- Usually to inform (e.g. presentation of work accomplished)
- Occasionally to persuade (e.g. proposal, or novel result that is improvement over past results)
- Rarely (but NOT never) to inspire or motivate
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Open/body/close structure:

- Open: Tell them what you will say. Note: No equations or graphs yet.
- Body: Say it.
- Close: Tell them what you said.

Pattern for body:

- Usually is problem/solution format
- Occasionally is theory/plan of action structure (especially for proposals)
- Connectives are important to avoid losing audience attention
Guidelines for using transparencies:

- Be certain you are familiar with the operation of the equipment
- Make sure that your transparencies are in the correct order
- Be certain that neither you nor the projector blocks anyone’s view
- Turn to face your audience
- Use a pointer to note a detail on a transparency
- Write on the transparency only if you are very confident
- Turn the projector off when you are not discussing information that is shown on a transparency
- Rehearse WITH the transparencies!
Guidelines for preparing transparencies:

- Allow the same amount of blank space at the top of each transparency
- Use headings
- Use short phrases (rather than complete sentences)
- Limit each line to six to eight words
- Limit longer text to four to six lines
- Use bullets to list items (or numbers for steps in a procedure)
- Use a simple typeface, *not a Flowery One*
- Use upper and lower case (ALL UPPER CASE is for EMPHASIS)
- Limit the number and complexity of equations on a single transparency
- Put headings and axis labels on graphs
- Make data lines heavier than axis or grid lines