

USE OF PRESENTATION SOFTWARE AND VISUAL AIDS

OBJECTIVES/RATIONALE

Expertise in communication skills is necessary for the dissemination of scientific knowledge. The student will communicate conclusions clearly and concisely to an audience of professionals.

TEKS: 121.12 9A, 9B

TAKS ELA 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

KEY POINTS

PREPARATION

Before you write one word of your presentation, consider your audience, purpose, and setting.

1. Audience – consider the following:

- Age
- Education/knowledge level
- Biases/beliefs
- Reason audience is here
- Size of the audience

2. Purpose – The purpose will answer the question, “What do I want my audience to feel or know when they leave the room?” Write a statement of purpose to help you stay focused.

3. Setting – check the room, the lights, and the equipment that will be available.

WRITING THE PRESENTATION

1. Gather all of your research and write one long rough draft.

2. Go through the rough draft with a red pen and underline 3-4 key points.

3. Go to the original rough draft and find statements, facts, statistics, and examples that support your key points. Use clear, concrete examples wherever possible. Develop colorful, audience-specific images, metaphors, or examples to explain difficult concepts. Relate new material to something the audience already knows

4. Organize the Speech

a. Identify the objective

- To inform
- To reach
- To motivate
- To persuade
- To sell

- b. Establish your point of view**
 - Determine the audience
 - Determine the information you want to convey
 - Explain the significance and benefits
 - Determine what action, if any, listeners may take

- c. Outline the elements**
 - Clear objective
 - Strong introduction
 - Main points with logical flow
 - Supporting subpoints
 - Convincing conclusion

- d. Introduction**
 - Announcements
 - Attention-getting
 - What will be accomplished?

- e. Highlight main points to be covered**
 - What does the audience need to know?
 - Establish relevance to the subject
 - Define goals
 - Broad in scope
 - Limit main points to 3-5 subtopics

- f. Determine the type of conclusion needed**
 - Fact conclusion
 - Decision conclusion
 - Challenge conclusion

- g. Develop transitions – connect to the audience**
 - Between sections
 - Between slides
 - Between bullets
 - Clarify points

5. Write a detailed outline – assemble the speech-illustrate main points (Facts, statistics, analogies, examples, personal experience, demonstrations)

- a. Introduction
- b. Body – approximately 80% of the total time
 - i. Key Point
 - 1. supporting data or example
 - 2. supporting data or example
 - 3. significance
 - ii. Key Point

1. supporting data or example
2. supporting data or example
3. significance

iii. Key Point

1. supporting data or example
2. supporting data or example
3. significance

c. Conclusion - approximately 10% of the total time

6. **Evaluate the presentation and check for logical development** of information provided.
7. **Evaluate the examples.** Do you have too many? Not enough? Don't waste time with inappropriate or irrelevant information.
8. **Mark the outline** where the audience will best understand the concept through a visual aid. Keep in mind that visual aids should only be used when they can explain an idea more clearly and quickly than you can. Write down the purpose of every slide/visual. Justify its use.
9. **Ask a colleague/classmate to review your outline.** They may be able to point out a problem that you have overlooked. Have you selected the major points? Are they logically arranged? Is there anything that isn't clear?
10. **Develop the introduction** so it clearly states your message and purpose, that supports it, and prepares your listeners for the detailed discussion that will follow. The best way to keep the audience's attention is to tell them up front what's in it for them. A relevant humorous story can be an effective opener. Avoid old jokes and clichés.
11. **Develop a strong conclusion.** Spend some time developing a strong conclusion so you won't drop the ball at the end.
12. **Revise again and eliminate.** Inevitably, your research will provide you with more information than you can use in your presentation. Your purpose and your audience will help guide you to set the boundaries on the material so you do not overwhelm the audience. Don't be discouraged about the amount of information you cannot include in the presentation. You will be grateful you have the information during the question and answer period. If there is information that you cannot include but that would be useful to your audience for further study, you can always provide a handout.
13. **Repeat.** Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them. Why? Because the average speaker talks at a rate of 100-120 words a minute. We listen at a top rate of 400 words a minute. So listeners are constantly dropping in and out of your presentation. Even the most exciting speaker doesn't hold everyone's complete attention.
14. **Use short sentences, active verbs, and parallelism.**
15. **Use signposts.** Help your audience through your talk by using words and phrases to tell them where you are going. For example: "There are three steps in this procedure: first... second... third..."
16. **Avoid difficult to pronounce words**
17. **Use contractions.** They will make you sound more conversational and relaxed.

18. **Replace abstract and general words with more exact words whenever possible.** This will help the audience better visualize and retain information longer.

EFFECTIVE VISUALS

Before you can achieve any of your presentation goals, you must capture and hold your audience's attention. The average adult attention span is only eight seconds. So it is essential that you continually engage your audience with new ideas and images. Research shows that 87% of information stored in the brain is received visually. When done well and appropriately, visual aids will also boost your credibility with your audience.

The most important rule when creating a multimedia presentation is to keep it simple to make sure your audience understands and follows the presentation. Computer generated presentations have the advantage of being easily edited and customized.

According to a study done by the University of Minnesota, visual aids increase the chances that your audience will be persuaded by your position by 43%! The amount of information and the way it is presented to the audience has a great effect. Simplicity and continuity throughout the entire presentation enables the audience to grasp your message. It is important that the audience is not overloaded with too much information on one visual.

A. Content / Text

- Limit to 3-6 bullets per slide
- Limit each bullet to six words
- Left-align (don't center) lists and bullets
- Be concise with words

B. Font

- Use 24 point or larger
- Use no more than 2 fonts per visual
- Times Roman is ideal for headings
- Arial provides easier reading when used in the body of the visual
- Use mixed case for legibility
- Save CAPS for emphasis but never more than 7 words per visual
- Italics are hard to read in large bodies of text – reserve for emphasis

C. Check for:

spelling errors
grammatical errors
inconsistent punctuation

D. Psychology of Colors

RED - stimulating
motivates action
increases expectations
heightens sense of realism
urges to achieve results and succeed
impulse, desire, passion
used to increase enthusiasm and induce quick decisions

BLUE – calming, therapeutic
credibility
increases sensitivity
tradition, lasting values
loyalty, security, contentment
used when credibility and trust need to be established

BLACK – direct, forceful
in the past
powerful, strong, uncontrollable
negates emotions
formal
without choice
used in financial reports

GREEN – life, energy, faith
opinionated and self-assertive
discussion
needs to impress and exercise control
used in presentations requiring feedback

YELLOW – bright, cheerful
stimulating, attractive
initiates actions and ideas
seeks change
creates anxiety
used for text against dark background
NEVER used as background color!

GRAY – neutrality
lack of commitment
used when audience is to make a decision
NEVER used when showing information critical to establishing objectives

Color Websites: <http://web.topchoice.com/~abyers/moduleten/html/lessons/lesson1.htm>

- This site contains an entire course on presentations!

<http://www.ukans.edu/cwis/units/coms2/vpa/vpa.htm>

- This site contains an entire course on presentations!

www.alleykatt.com

- Choose color analysis (on left)
- Choose color and emotions (at top)

www.pantone.com/allaboutcolor/allaboutcolor.asp?ID=34

- Select color research
- Select Consumer Color Preference

E. Tables and Charts

- **Bar charts** compare things that you can quantify
- **Line charts** represent changes over time
- **Pie charts** show parts of the whole
- **Tables** illustrate timetables, schedules, lists, etc.

- Determine the best background color to convey your message.
- Label your chart or table with a specific title.
- Format tables and charts to maximize readability
 - bar charts – use different colors (dark to light) to distinguish bars
 - line charts – limit lines to 4 per chart (from dark to light)
 - pie charts – limit slices to 10 per pie (from dark to light)
- Use arrows to emphasize and eliminate the need to point at the screen
- Enliven charts by adding clip art to bar graphs
- Direct the eyes of the audience by highlighting significant data
- Charts should be readable and have logical flow when reading:
 - Left to right
 - Dark to light
 - Top to bottom

F. Qualities of Effective Visuals

1. **Purposeful** – Each visual should have a specific purpose. If slides are constructed only to help you read your way through the presentation, the audience will be bored.

2. **Accurate** – The value of the information depends on the integrity and care with which the data was collected and analyzed.
3. **Selective** – Avoid the temptation to overwhelm the audience with too much detail. They can only remember so much and will tune you out if they feel overwhelmed.
4. **Concise** – Present the data only once. Time is limited, so choose and design visuals that convey the data quickly and accurately.
5. **Consistent** – Display similar data in a similar form. Slides should be prepared so that all words, lines, colors, styles, and other elements are consistent.
6. **Focused** – Tables and graphs should make a point. The point should be apparent from the design of the visual and should be stated in the title.
7. **Clear and Simple** – Abbreviations, awkward word choices, and confusing details make a visual ineffective and difficult to understand. Arrangements of design elements, such as graph labels and legends, may cause distraction if not simple and clear.
8. **Effective** – Keep words to a minimum. Visuals should be immediately understandable.
9. **Convincing** – Make sure the message you are trying to convey is made quickly and clearly.
10. **Independent** – A good visual speaks for itself. A table, with its title and footnotes, and a graph, with its legend, should be understandable without extensive explanation.

G. More Communication Hints:

- Build progressive visual sequences on your slides revealing one line of information at a time to generate visual interest and renew the audience's attention.
- Face the audience with the screen on your left.
- Use a remote control for changing visuals.
- Control the use of the laser pointer. Lasers are helpful in directing the audience's eyes the point where you want them to focus. It should not bounce through words and should be turned off as soon as your point is made.
- Never plunge the audience into total darkness. Dim lights but maintain eye contact with the audience at all times.
- Pause each time you change slides to give the audience time to ingest information.
- Always keep your feet aimed at the audience. This way you will never be talking to your slides.
- Ask permission to use photographs of subjects.
- Distribute handouts before or during the presentation only if they are needed for note taking. All other handouts should be distributed after the presentation.

A good handout should include:

- A brief summary of the presentation
- An outline of the structure of the presentation, main points, supporting data
- Charts, graphs, and tables explaining complex data
- An annotated bibliography