Improving your professional speaking skills: Who cares?
Career Development Workshop – September 16, 2015

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Getting started
  o  Make the audience feel welcome and included in your talk (talk about yourself or reference something specific to the audience).
  o  Set positive, comfortable tone.
  o  Enthusiastic, calm and controlled.
  o  Set out your goals for the talk.

Delivery
  •  Volume - Speak to the last row of the room
  •  Don’t mumble, don’t slur the ends of words
  •  Take time with jargon words
  •  Slow down!
  •  Use pauses
  •  Add emphasis to certain words (avoid monotone)
  •  Don’t read from your slides – EVER.

Play the role
  •  Show enthusiasm!
  •  Confident, clear, motivated
  •  Don’t shrink onstage; expand.
  •  Be passionate, interested, focused.
  •  Smile!
  •  Be creative.

Make eye contact!
  •  Move eyes every 4-5 seconds or at end of a thought.

Stress visual simplicity
  •  Use flow charts, graphics or video to convey your message.
  •  Minimize animations

Slides
  •  Minimize lists, and number of items per list
  •  No more than 3 bullets per slide and one line per bullet
  •  Don’t get stuck on a word slide (words only) for longer than 2 minutes.
  •  Keep details to a minimum.
• Relate concepts to each other.
• “Rule of three” - No more than three points per subject.
• Fine tune your transitions - make the connections crystal clear.

Use breaks!
• Break up with stories, analogies, examples, pictures, questions
• Incorporate discussion time

Make audience your focus!
• Make your talk relevant to them.
• Adjust to your audience - Speed up? Slow down? Speak louder? More clearly?
• WATCH the audience while you’re presenting.

Tell a Story!
• Work out the logic first. Don’t compose your talk on PowerPoint or Prezi.
• Start with the take-home message.
• Start with broad concepts and then arrange the details on that framework.

Conclude strongly
• Summarize and relate back to the audience and the big picture
• Emphasize take-home messages.

Practice in front of an audience.
• Seek constructive criticism.
• Focus practice on strengthening your weak areas.

Coursework opportunity
• PLP 628 – Improving Your Professional Speaking Skills
• Fall Semesters annually
• 2 credits
• Meets once per week
• Limit: 16 students per semester
• Instructors: M.L. Gleason and L.L. Leandro