

16.621 Reactions to 16.622 Progress Reports – Spring 2003

What I noticed:

- It's important to project your voice so that it carries over the fan in that room.
- I was impressed that the presenters did not read from the slides.
- The slides in the presentation had just the right amount of information on them, and they used graphics to underline what they were saying.
- One presentation stood out because it was so simply designed. It "blew the others away."
- The presenters divided their presentation into two sections. That organization helped me.
- The slides were very concise, and the presenters filled in the detail.
- The presenters used colored graphics very effectively.
- The presenter's nervousness was distracting. He refrained from eye contact, and his gestures were distracting.
- The partners had trouble answering technical questions.
- There's more to it than just the presentation. Presenters had to give handouts, coordinate slides, remember where to stand, etc.
- Presenters weren't formal enough. They were too casual.
- Slides were text heavy, and presentation didn't always follow the slides.
- The way they used the pointer was distracting.
- Physical positioning was important in engaging the audience, but you should not stand in front of the screen.
- I liked the way the presenters directed the audience's attention to a point without actually reading it from the screen.
- The presenters spoke so fast. They had too much material so they were rushing through it.
- The presenter had great eye contact.

- The presenters did a good job of sharing the presentation and the discussion.
- Two teams had handouts, and one did not. I found it more useful to have the handout.
- Slides with just a few points are easier to read than ones with big chunks of text.
- I noticed that the introduction seemed to be the hardest part of the presentation.
- I learned it's not a good idea to get into a hostile argument with your partner.
- One team, in particular, had good body language. They seemed poised and professional.
- The speaker said "um" and "and" a lot.
- This is no place for sarcasm.
- I found the use of the prop distracting.

What I want to remember when I give my presentation:

- I want to be sure we make our presentation appropriate for a mixed audience.
- I want to be sure that my partner and I do not contradict one another in the discussion.
- I need to increase the volume of my voice.
- I want to remain poised in front of a large number of people. (I am shy.)
- I need to come prepared to answer technical questions.
- I want to remember to speak at a calm and casual pace.
- I want to remember to have a backup in case that project in 116 doesn't work well.
- I want to remember not to have too much information.
- We should remember to think about the questions that faculty might ask.
- I usually ad lib. I want to remember not to do that.
- I want to remember not to drift into too casual a speech and behavior.
- I have to remember to speak clearly AND slowly.
- Too much information on a slide is overwhelming.

Questions:

- Is it acceptable to make jokes and use metaphors to describe ideas or must everything be strictly professional language? Does this vary with different types of presentations?
- Should I thank the audience at the beginning of the presentation for their presence?
- Is it possible to be overdressed?
- Should presenters coordinate their attire to match one another?
- Should I repeat the question before I answer it?
- Will we be able to practice our presentation?
- How dressed up is “business casual”?
- What colors are displayed on the 116 projector?
- What exactly are faculty and staff looking for in the oral presentation?
- To what extent is the presenter allowed to make gestures?
- Are gestures simply distracting and to be avoided if possible?
- Are we allowed to read from the slides/screens at all?
- How professional should we appear?
- I want to know how to organize information in a speech.
- How do I “grab” attention of the audience?
- Powerpoint is an abused tool. How do I make appropriate visuals? How do I use PowerPoint well?
- How much detail is enough detail?
- Do we have to give a lot of technical background or just an overview?
- What is the goal of the presentation?
- I’d like some tips on how to introduce the presentation.
- Is there a recommended style?

- Is there a rule about switching presenters?
- Do you recommend passing around a prop?

- Do you have recommendations about how long to spend on introductions, etc?