Progress Reports
Progress reports are essential.

• Often part of scheduled deliverables
• Maintain contact with funding source$, industry partners, and colleagues
• Provide precise technical description of work as project develops and/or changes
• Scrutinized for accountability and management practices
In .622, the oral progress report

• Is quite brief
  – 8 minutes presentation & 5 minutes discussion
• Provides a milestone for the team
• Identifies barriers to progress and ways to overcome them
• Keeps faculty and staff up to date
Formats for written and oral progress reports

• Written progress reports can be a short report or even a memo or a lengthy letter.
  – Include project title, funding source(s), contract numbers, funding period, organizational/institutional information, contact information
  – Follow conventions for written documents: headings, page numbers, etc.
• Oral progress reports can be brief (.622) or quite lengthy and can range from informal to very formal.

• Some sort of visual organizer helps in an oral report (PPT for .622) or handouts, posters, etc
  – Include project title, team members, project advisor (s), date, relevant funding, institutional, or course data.
  – Follow conventions for effective oral presentations.
Information organization for the .622 progress report

- **Brief** introduction to project
  - Background, context and/or significance
- HOS
- Experimental overview and technical approach
- Progress to date or project status
- Problems and solutions to them
  - Problems are part of design, but your effort to address them is very important.
Information organization continued

- Design changes
  - Show the gap between what you planned to do and what you’ve done.
  - Design changes are sometimes inevitable, but be prepared to explain clearly.
- Schedule (revised, if necessary) and statement of overall progress
- Work to be done
Tips for progress reports

- Review audience analysis
  - Audience agendas for a progress report are different than they were for a proposal.
    - Different concern, different focus
    - Also, progress reports are where people hear about problems.
  - Audience for progress report is mixed.
    - Experts, technicians, laypeople, decision makers
    - Writer/speaker must modify “expert” dialog used within team and with advisor
Tips. . .

• Remember that it is more difficult to absorb information aurally than it is from text.
  – Plan to use a few effective graphics.
  – Think about what audience needs to know rather than everything that you know.
  – Think about pace of report, the way the screens look, font size.

• Have a strong introduction and clear conclusion.

• Remember to practice.
  – Control nerves, spot “rough” spots, edit, check timing
Tips . . . .

• Be prepared for rigorous or challenging questions and discussions.
  – Practice potential answers.
  – Have a few back up slides.
  – Maintain a non-defensive attitude.

• Use the discussion period to ask your own questions.
  – Usually, the key people are all present, so use the time effectively.