



PART 4—PRESENTATION SKILLS

Notes



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section *Your Presentation*
Skills 4.1, 4.2, 4.3.

4.1 Introduction

Your presentation skills are the tools you use to transfer knowledge. Your ability to apply each of these skills effectively will determine how well you communicate the subject you're teaching, and how successful you are at building respect in the classroom. Key elements such as eye contact, encouraging student participation, and the proper use of humor can have a positive impact on your presentation.

4.2 Eye Contact

Eye contact does more to enhance your presentation than anything else. Learning to be comfortable using eye contact effectively is one improvement you can make. Your voice may carry your message, but your eyes are what hold your students. Don't single out a single student or area of the room. Look at everybody so you develop a relationship. Think of eye contact as the electric current that keeps students engaged.

Direct eye contact may not be comfortable for some students. Auditory learners may actually close their eyes to better focus on your words. Some students might be uncomfortable because of low self-esteem or other personal issues.

Cultural differences can affect a student's comfort with eye contact. In some cultures, direct eye contact may be perceived as a lack of respect for the speaker. Accept this as a normal situation without doing or saying anything that might make someone uncomfortable.

Never turn your back to your students to write on a board, point at a visual aid, use a pointer, or anything else while speaking. Use the pointer that's built into PowerPoint's slide show as the laser pointer, and only use a wireless mouse to change slides—never use it as a pointer.

Always face your audience because as soon as you look away, you've lost the relationship. Remember, relationship is a key element to being a great instructor. Never speak from the back of the room.

4.3 Hands

What do you do with your hands? If you're comfortable and confident with your audience and subject matter, your hands won't be a problem. Sometimes, though, you just

need to do something with them! Just be aware that your hands can speak louder than your words.

You should simply use your hands naturally, but understand what actions they might communicate:

- One hand nervously twirling a mustache or lock of hair gives the impression that you might need some time to think about the issue/question.
- Hands in pockets might communicate that you're nervous and you don't know what to do with them. However, I have a habit of putting my hands in my pockets when a student asks me a question.
- Note: Empty your pockets prior to a presentation because jangling coins can be distracting to the class and you might not hear a thing.
- Hands folded together over the chest or crossed can suggest you've closed up, but I have a tendency to fold my hands over my chest when I'm trying to figure out the answer to a difficult question.

Just do what comes naturally—relax. It's not what you do with your hands that counts; it's the language of the entire body that conveys the real message. It's a good idea to record yourself teaching and then watch the recording. That way you'll be able to see the nuances you're projecting and make changes if necessary.

Notes