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section *The Classroom Setting*  
5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9,  
5.10, 5.11, 5.12.

## 5.4 Audiovisual Aids/Props

Use audiovisual aids that give you freedom to move around, such as wireless microphones and wireless computer controls for PowerPoint presentations. You can do a web search and read reviews for the newest wireless presentation remotes that include a count-down timer that can be set to go off (vibrate) just before a break is scheduled to help you with tracking time.

PowerPoint presentations provide an easy-to-follow outline that gives structure and cohesion to your presentation. The appropriate use of graphics can help students understand technical concepts or difficult topics. Additional props can add to the presentation; everyone likes to see new products and/or toys.

Don't make the mistake of filling PowerPoint slides with text and simply reading them to the audience. Be prepared to provide the instruction without reading every slide word for word. Use the presentation as a guide.

## 5.5 Equipment

Be prepared at all times. Check out the classroom/meeting room and equipment before students arrive; preferably the day before. Check the:

- Table/chair layout. Remove extras.
- Lighting. Remove lamps that wash out the screen.
- Tripping hazards. Tape down power cords.
- Temperature. Adjust the room temperature if necessary.

This is also the time to decide where you want your props and audiovisual gear.

If there's any equipment failure after you begin, don't draw attention to it. What do you do with a major failure? The situation looks bleak and it could be a long wait.

- Don't get mad.
- Stay calm.
- Take a break and see how long it will take to work things out.
- Tell a brief story that relates to the situation.
- Return to the subject and act as if nothing is wrong.

If you're using a PowerPoint presentation on your own laptop computer, you should be prepared for equipment failure by having a backup copy of it on a CD, DVD, SD card, and/or a USB jump drive or flash drive. Keep a copy of the file(s) on your website or ftp site that you can access from the Internet. If the unexpected happens and your computer fails, you'll have a copy that can be used on a substitute computer. Use a remote device to advance the PowerPoint and be sure you have extra batteries. Have a backup bulb for the projector, or arrange for a backup projector.

Tape down the power cords for your computer and projector to avoid tripping over them or knocking the equipment to the floor. Pay attention to details such as being sure the computer is plugged in before beginning the presentation and turning your cell phone off. If you'll be using it as a clock, mute it.

Notes

## 5.6 Handouts

Verify the number of expected attendees before the class and be sure to have more handouts/textbooks than the number of students you anticipate. Providing this type of material allows students to go back at a later time and review what you talked about.

Make an effort to distribute handouts/textbooks before class or during breaks to avoid distractions and interruptions while you're teaching. Expect some attendees to be late, and try not to create a distraction when getting their materials to them.

## 5.7 Lighting

Check out the lighting the night before the class to be sure it's sufficient for the students to be able to read their books and notes. Ensure there's no direct lighting on the screen(s) that might diminish the quality of your PowerPoint presentation. If there's a glare on the screen don't dim the lights, try to re-position the screen or have some lamps removed to resolve the problem instead. Make sure someone is there who's familiar with the operation and switching of the lighting and can make adjustments as needed.

## 5.8 Microphones/Sound Systems

Anytime you have more than 40 students you should have a sound system. A sound system helps ensure that each student can hear you and also saves your throat and voice.

Use portable sound systems for small classes. A small portable system like "Go Speak" will work for classes under 100 students. Do a web search on "portable PA systems" and be sure to read reviews to get the best value for your money.

A handheld wired microphone ties you down and isn't a good solution. A handheld wireless type is a little better and allows you movement but ties up your hands. The next best option is a wireless clip-on microphone that you put on your shirt or tie, but you'll need to limit your head motions for optimum pick up. A wireless on-ear microphone is the best. Whichever one you choose to use, be sure to turn it off during breaks!

## 5.9 Platforms

Platforms are necessary so your students can see you when the class has more than 150 attendees. Remember, it's all about the students so use a platform when necessary even if you're uncomfortable doing so. Make sure you contact the event facility in advance to arrange for one.

## 5.10 Podiums/Lecterns

Don't use them! Podiums and lecterns place a barrier between you and your students when you should be doing everything in your power to get close to them.

Use an adjustable table for your laptop to bring it up to a height where you can see it and work with it while standing, but without having to bend over too much (your back will thank you). Being able to see the laptop monitor while moving around the room will improve your comfort level while presenting, and allow you to read from it instead of turning your back to the students to do so.

Notes

## 5.11 Projectors

Provide your own projector if possible so you know that any equipment compatibility problems will be minimized. If you must arrange the use of one from the facility, request a projector that has a brightness of at least 2,500 lumens for classrooms and 5,000 lumens for larger venues. The contrast ratio should be 4,000:1 or higher (10,000:1 is very good).

An LCD projector is best for color although DLP is best for lumens, but that type may not provide the picture quality needed for PowerPoint slides. Make sure you have backup lamps and an available backup projector in case of equipment failure.

Laser projectors combine the best qualities of every type and have exceptional brightness. In addition, there are no lamps to change and they have an extremely long life. This type of projector gives the best performance and lowest cost of operation, but the initial cost is higher.

Write down the name of the manufacturer and model of projectors that you've used and liked, and talk to other presenters about the kind that works best for them. You can also study projector specifications using internet resources to find recommendations for the best projector for your needs.

## 5.12 Refreshments

It's important for students to be comfortable during a presentation. Pitchers of water or bottled water should be available during the day. Extra water at the refreshment table is a good idea. Even if coffee is provided, some participants will prefer water.

If you're working with a convention center, order regular coffee based on 15 people per gallon. Decaffeinated coffee (1 gallon per 50 people) and tea (½ gallon per 100 people) are also good to have. Don't include "refresh" in your contract because an offer to "refresh" the coffee means whatever is there will be taken away and a new full pot(s) will be brought in—at full charge. Arrange for the pots to be left out until they're empty.

Be very clear about who's authorized to order beverages and/or snacks and make sure that information is included in the contract. Check with the hotel if you can pay for beverages on the basis of what is actually consumed. If you have beverages provided for breaks, and are being charged "on consumption," count the number left over at the end of the day and only pay for those that were consumed.

Don't include lunch in the registration unless it reduces the meeting room costs significantly or is necessary for the meeting logistics. Some meeting locations aren't close to other dining facilities, or traffic would prevent the students from returning on time. Being able to get everyone back to class promptly is important and must be factored into this decision.

If you do include lunch, turn in a count that's 90 percent of that expected. Determine if the convention center will add more if needed. If you turn in a number that's higher than the number of actual attendees, you'll be charged for the initial number you provided to the facility.

Have your contract with the facility specify who's authorized to approve charges and then approve all of them every day. Doing so will allow you to bring up any errors or discrepancies on your bill in a timely manner and while the day is still fresh in your mind.

### 5.13 Summary

The classroom setting is an integral part of any presentation. Capture your students' attention as soon as they walk in the door by dressing it up and having handouts available. Make it as nice as possible. Do your best to not teach in an unacceptable environment; avoid shops and similar industrial areas.

Be sure the classroom is laid out so it doesn't feel cramped. Having space for people to be able to take notes, lay handouts and/or textbooks open, and be able to move around will help your students be more comfortable.

Remember to use audiovisual equipment appropriate for the size of your classroom and number of attendees.