GUIDE TO PRESENTING SEMINARS
CHEM 490

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**Introduction**

**FACT:** In order to graduate, you have to present a seminar.

Does even the thought of presenting a seminar start your knees wobbling? Are your palms sweating? Is your stomach doing flip-flops? You’re not alone! Anxiety attacks nearly every student facing the task of presenting a seminar, but it needn't paralyze you. You can learn how to organize and present your thoughts in an interesting, well-delivered way. You can gain and hold your audience’s attention. And you can keep your nerves under control.

Perhaps even more than the actual speaking before a group of fellow students and chemistry faculty, the responsibility for the preparation and presentation of the seminar causes a high level of anxiety. The Guide to Presenting Seminars is designed to reduce this responsibility and the possible/probable anxiety by providing a ‘standard procedure’ for presenting seminars.

Seminars are one of the outstanding events in an undergraduate's education and with good reason. Compare seminar with some of the other measures of a student's ability such as written examinations. There is a certain anonymity into which a student can escape when taking a written examinations. After all, the student is not face to face with one's examiner and besides, there are others taking the same test. When a student presents a seminar, the student is taking the test alone and everyone is watching. Seminar is essentially a one-shot event thus if one “lays an egg” the student does not have the opportunity to make up for it on the “next test.” While all of this makes a seminar a forbidding obstacle, it also offers great excitement and opportunity. If a student gives a good seminar, the glory is the student's alone and from it the student will derive great personal satisfaction and the respect of fellow students and the faculty.

Seminars are an educational tool which functions to improve a student's ability to investigate a topic of current research interest and to communicate to others in a clear, concise, and pleasing manner the results of their investigation. Seminars serve, in addition, as a forum for a discussion and exchange of information, which is a necessary requisite for the growth of chemical knowledge. Indeed, one of the primary objectives of the American Chemical Society is the "increase and diffusion of scientific knowledge."

It is naturally understood that how one prepares for a seminar and the nature of the seminar itself will depend very much on the individual who is giving it. Nevertheless, it may be useful to put down some suggestions for preparing a seminar; thus, the purpose of this guide. The Guide to Presenting Seminars does not attempt to 'unlock' the secrets of professional speakers. Rather, it aims to break down the task of preparing and presenting a seminar into easily manageable steps. Given some time to study the techniques in this guide, and with a little practice, you'll find that presenting a seminar isn't all that difficult. In fact, you just might find out what lots of other students have already learned (but few admit)--presenting seminars can be fun!

So let's say you somehow manage to stumble through giving your seminar and at last finally graduate. You might now think that your seminar ‘nightmare’ is over and behind you. WRONG! Unless you lock yourself in a closet, you can't escape it! Once you graduate, public speaking will become a part of your daily routine. From your first job interview right up to meetings with your boss, you will be called upon to use your oral presentation skills. Every day you will be expected to present your viewpoint clearly and persuasively. So as long as you will be giving seminars and presentations, why not make them good ones?

The Seminar Planning Outline (Form 1 in the Appendix) lists the steps involved in presenting an effective seminar. Use the Seminar Planning Outline as a guide when you read the text. Essentially, Form 1 gives an overview of what it takes to give a seminar. Most people don't like listening to boring seminars. So how about doing your audience a favor and making your seminar an enjoyable and stimulating experience for everyone, yourself included!

**Scheduling**

On the basis of the results of a random drawing, during the first class meeting, each student will select a date for his/her seminar presentation. If for some reason you find that you will not be able to present your seminar on the originally scheduled date, immediately notify the seminar coordinator.
Selection of Topic

The topic selected should be of interest to workers currently active in chemical research. The best topics for seminar almost always contain potential controversy which is why, in part, they are interesting. The topic should not have been recently reviewed; that is, you are expected to conduct a literature search and evaluate the recent chemical literature yourself. It is also recommended that the topic not be one which is overly familiar to most of the audience.

For a regular reader of the chemical literature, the choice of a seminar topic becomes more a case of selecting the best one out of a large number of suitable ones. However, for most students, the selection of a seminar topic is considered one of the most difficult parts of the process. The seminar topic selected should be one that interests the speaker and, one would hope, is likely to interest the audience. Articles in which the authors state that their results and/or interpretations disagree with previous work are naturals for developing controversy. Articles in which the speaker disagrees with the authors and is willing to expend some effort in developing a strong argument to refute the authors are even better. However, choosing a topic like this is somewhat dangerous, but if done well it provides a very interesting and impressive seminar.

Most students should avoid selecting topics which one of the faculty members in the department is quite familiar. In the first place this topic will fail to expand the horizons of many people in the department since it has undoubtedly been discussed before, and secondly the student sacrifices the advantage of being the ‘most knowledgeable’ person in the room on that subject.

In selecting a topic, the student should also ask the question, “Is this work significant?” Defining what is chemically significant is somewhat difficult. Anything that gets published in a reputable journal is presumably significant. However, there are some topics that one ought to avoid. Many important discoveries are first published in fragmentary form as notes or communications. As exciting as these may appear to be and despite the fact that they might turn out to be very important, they rarely make good seminar topics unless they represent the culmination of previously published efforts. Usually there is simply not enough data published to provide meat for a seminar. Additionally, due to the space limitations in notes and communications there is not enough room for the author to expound on the significance of his data. Lastly, work which is essentially a repetition of some earlier, better known work is also not suitable for a seminar topic.

One of the most common errors committed by students preparing a seminar is that of being too ambitious. A topic should be chosen which can be isolated and covered thoroughly in no longer than the academic hour (i.e., 50 minutes). Clearly, topics like “Chromatography from 1860 to present” or “Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy” will result in disaster. In many ways chemical discussions are like gases—they will expand to occupy any given volume. As a result, one must be quite brutal about keeping to the point. Additionally, many of the side topics will be very interesting, but their siren call must be resisted for the sake of brevity.

NOTE: The choice of a seminar topic must be approved by the seminar coordinator by the fourth week of the quarter or two weeks prior to the date it is scheduled to be given, whichever is sooner.

Length

While there is no definitive length for student seminars, it is expected that seminars should last between 35-45 minutes with a question-and-answer period following. A good deal can be said in that amount of time. Trying to judge the amount of time necessary to present a given amount of information is difficult. Only through extensive practice is one able to estimate the ‘run time’ of a seminar with any degree of accuracy. It seems, however, that most inexperienced speakers find that their actual talk usually runs a little shorter than rehearsal.

Time Commitment

Once a topic has been chosen and the references ferreted out, there is no reason why it should take longer than three weeks to prepare a good seminar. As a result, it is not necessary for a student to choose a topic and start roughing it out in the first week of the quarter. However, if a student waits until late into the quarter to select a topic and begin preparing the seminar, the typical result is that as the seminar approaches it will occupy one’s thoughts a great deal of the time, and those thoughts won’t be pleasant ones. The result is that most often such a student will spend much more time preparing yet still give a much poorer seminar than someone who plans ahead.
What Does It Take to Give a Good Seminar?

Have you ever suffered through a seminar speaker's poor performance, feeling sorry for him or her, and perhaps a little embarrassed, too? This should have taught you two things. One, for the most part audiences are sympathetic to speakers. They're not looking for mistakes. In fact, they want you to do well, but they don't expect perfection. Second, you don't want to put yourself in the same position! If you don't want this to happen to you, you need to know what it takes to give a good seminar.

A successful seminar can assume a variety of forms, but most of them have certain characteristics in common. Most importantly, it is necessary that there be a clear, precise transfer of information. Many of the elements of good lecturing go into a good seminar. Consider what one appreciates in an effective teacher. Their presentation is usually well organized with one thought logically following the next. They tell a good story in succinct sentences. They never get too far above the class and seem to sense the moment when what is being said is not getting across. This is no accident. It requires thorough preparation and a presence of mind as the lecturer is standing in front of the class. It should be clear that the better one is prepared, the more attention that can devoted to the audience. Puzzled looks and glazed eyeballs usually indicate that you had better explain that last bit of reasoning in another way. As you prepare a seminar, you should try to emulate the qualities of those professors of yours who are good lecturers and try to avoid the faults of the others.

Seminars which provoke controversy are, by far, the most fun. This is probably the quality which is most difficult to build into a seminar. Many students deliberately avoid controversy because they are afraid they will be given a hard time—their idea is to pick a nice safe subject and stay out of trouble. The chances are, however, that a safe subject is not contemporary and usually not stimulating. The safe subjects are found in textbooks, the controversial ones in the current literature. As a general rule, material presented in textbooks seldom has a place in a seminar except as background.

Actually, this business of getting a hard time from the audience is an exaggeration. If the student has chosen a topic astutely and has prepared thoroughly, by the time the seminar is given, the student should be more knowledgeable on the subject than anyone else in the room. If a seminar has firm underpinnings it becomes virtually impossible for someone to heckle successfully unless the student gets rattled.

A word about getting rattled. Almost every seminar speaker is nervous before they begin. It is a perfectly natural thing to be nervous. The point is, are you going to make it work for or against you? A certain amount of nervous excitement, even fear, can be used to one's advantage. Every athlete knows the value of being 'up' for an event. There is an excitement in the stomach, the adrenalin is flowing and the eye is bright. All of these things make a person perform at their best. But this has to be a controlled excitement, not paralysis by fear.

Most good seminars are entertaining. However, some feel that to be entertaining during a technical talk is somehow not in keeping with the dignity of the affair. Not true! Many good speakers have a liberal amount of 'ham' in them. Jokes are not necessary although occasionally a joke may be in context. The American Chemical Society has not passed a rule that technical talks must be anhydrous. You should move around a bit, gesture with your arms, change the level in your voice, exude confidence, say things in unusual ways and introduce a surprise or two into your talk.

In summary, the ingredients of a good seminar include: a suitable topic, a thorough knowledge of that topic, extensive planning of the text and presentation, and a confidence and presence of mind during the talk, all of which is given individuality by the person who is presenting the seminar.
Your Audience

There are two basics to good seminar preparation: know what you are talking about, and know to whom you are talking. World renowned 'experts' are not necessarily good speakers because despite knowing a lot of information they don't always take the audience they are speaking to into account. Speaking 'above' your audience is certain to doom a seminar to failure. Likewise speaking 'below' your audience will lead to a similar fate. As a result, what you say, how you say it, and even why you say it depends on your audience. So before you put pen to paper, ask yourself these types of questions:

1. Who will be there?
2. Why are they there?
3. What do they know about your topic?
4. Do they want to hear what you have to say?
5. Are they likely to be sympathetic or hostile?

The more you know about your audience, the easier it will be to deliver a seminar that will be accepted rather than just endured.

For the most part, the ten to thirty people in the audience at student seminars consists almost exclusively of people from one of two groups: chemistry faculty and chemistry majors. The faculty tend to be well educated and motivated at least enough to give up the time to attend your seminar. The students are mostly junior and seniors (the majority of which are signed up for seminar like yourself). The audience is present and listening to you because you are a student majoring in chemistry and are speaking about a topic which relates to them. Most chemists are genuinely interested in chemistry and feel that they will benefit from what you have to say. So take advantage of the situation and speak on a topic which is of interest and will appeal to the audience. It is very easy to listen to a seminar on a topic which interests you. Remember to put yourself in the audience and ask, "What would I like to hear?"

In your seminar, be sure to use illustrations that the audience can relate to and tailor your language to be appropriate. Expecting your audience to understand the mechanism of some complex new instrument or to know some technical jargon will almost certainly result in failure. Remember that you are speaking to faculty as well as fellow students. Many of the speech manuals say that you should speak to the least educated member of the audience so that everyone will understand. However, this may come across as being condescending when the level of background and education of your audience varies as much as it does at student seminars. Setting an appropriate level for a seminar is one of the most difficult tasks a speaker faces and something about which even experienced speakers have doubts. As a general rule, be sure to explain all technical terms and do not take too much understanding for granted.

One of the best ways to research the audience at student seminars is to go to student seminars. Quickly you will know what you can expect in terms of the size of your audience and the kind of interest expressed. You can also get a feel for the size of the room, the audiovisual equipment available and appropriate dress for the seminar. A key rule to dressing for seminars is when in doubt overdress. It is very easy to remove a jacket or a tie to make your appearance less formal but it is very difficult to make shorts and a tee-shirt anything but informal.
Your Objective

After you know something about your audience, ask yourself why you are speaking to them. What do you want them to learn or to do as a result of your seminar? In essence, what is your objective? For some students the objective is just to get through it. However, if you want to give a successful seminar, ask yourself what problem you’re trying to solve or what specific information you need to communicate. Decide what you hope the result of your seminar will be and what reaction you want your audience to have. Most student seminars are informational, that is, they present information. However, unless at the same time you try to change their opinions or move the audience to act the only thing you will surely accomplish is to bore your audience.

Make your objective very specific. Begin by asking yourself questions such as:

1. What problems are you trying to solve?
2. What specific information do you need to impart?
3. What do you hope the result of your seminar will be?
4. Are you trying to teach and, if so, what?
5. Are you trying to persuade your audience to do something and, if so, what?

Unless your objective is perfectly clear in your own mind before you start to write your seminar, you won’t accomplish what you set out to do. So a ‘trick’ is to write your conclusion first. By doing this, it will be easier to sort through the vast quantity of background material available and select only those pieces of information that directly support your conclusion.
Organization

Speaking, like writing, must be organized to be effective. You need to analyze your audience, decide on your objective, and then gather and arrange your material. Most people realize these steps are part of writing, yet some forget them when it comes to speaking. Even an impromptu presentation requires you to quickly assess your audience and your objective and then organize your thoughts logically. Writing a seminar gives you the time to do each of these thoroughly.

When it comes to organizing your thoughts, start by jotting down any important ideas related to your topic. Research your subject thoroughly. This process usually takes place in the library. Sometimes it is also possible to get information by interviewing experts in the field. However, the key here is to get plenty of material and take copious notes. Later you can delete all the extraneous information.

Once you've gathered all your material, start to arrange your notes in a 'logical order.' Sometimes your material will be so straightforward that it will seem to arrange itself. Other times it will be so confusing that you'll have to give lots of thought to organization. There are many good ways to organize the body of your talk. Try to pick the one that will most effectively get your points across. First, list all the ideas you want to cover, then pick out the most important ones. At this point, you may have to simplify your topic and eliminate some ideas. Listeners can absorb only a limited amount of material at one sitting.

In order to be effective, seminars should be organized to answer the following questions, with emphasis on the first and last:

1. Why was this project undertaken?
2. What was done?
3. What was learned?
4. What does it mean?

Most experienced speakers develop their talks in blocks or units of information. Each block can stand alone, possibly with minor changes in the introduction and conclusion. Thus during the seminar they can then delete blocks if time is short, or add them to fit the specific interests of the audience.

No matter how you choose to organize your seminar, keep in mind this strategy for presenting your material:

1. First, tell your audience what you are going to tell them.
2. Second, present this information.
3. Third, tell your audience what you have just told them.

This applies to your seminar as a whole as well as for important points within your seminar. Repetition helps people understand and remember.

Finally, remember that program time is limited, therefore every word must count. Organizing and writing for an oral presentation can be more demanding than for publication; the listener must keep pace with you rather than concentrating on the written word at his or her leisure. Your presentation must be carefully planned, and each step should be properly coordinated with your visual aids.
Writing Your Seminar

Writing words to be spoken is different from writing words to be read. A listener has no opportunity to reread a section or glance back at a page for clarification. He or she has only one chance to understand your message. That's all the more reason to use repetition, short sentences, and explanations of unfamiliar words or acronyms. Use inflections, pauses, and pacing as your punctuation, and keep these things in mind as you write.

Start writing your seminar by jotting down ideas. Nothing is more terrifying to some writers than a blank piece of paper... so get something on it right away. And try to relax--you're not trying to write a best-seller. You're writing about something important to you, something you know a lot about, and something you probably talk about often already. Besides, you should already have researched your topic, collected any data you need to substantiate your claims, and outlined your major points and organized accordingly.

Using your ideas and your research notes, write everything down quickly without worrying about grammar or perfect wording. You'll edit later. For now, just get everything down on paper and then let it rest for a few days. When you go back to your draft, ask yourself the following:

1. What will I prove?
2. How will I prove it?
3. Did I make my viewpoints clear?
4. Is my proof well supported?
5. Am I specific?
6. Did I use examples?

If you have to, reorganize your material by cutting up your manuscript and pasting it back together in a different order. Refer back to the preceding section on organization if you are not satisfied with the development of your material. A different sequence of ideas might make a big difference. Try it.

Remember to limit your use of statistics--too many statistics and your audience will forget half of the information you present before they leave the room. It is far better to use fewer statistics and space them out perhaps repeating them for clarity.

Now review your manuscript against the Editorial Checklist (Appendix Form 2), and check your draft for grammar. Be sure you've used the active rather than the passive voice--"I called a meeting" sounds a lot better than "a meeting was called by me." Get rid of overused clichés. Be sure you are using words that you'll be comfortable speaking. Read your draft aloud as a final test. Does it sound natural? Do you sound like yourself?
Your Manuscript

The Opening (Introduction)

As you prepare your opening remarks, keep in mind that you have to arouse your listeners' interest immediately. Within the first few minutes, the audience will decide to listen to you or go on a mental vacation. If your message were written down, your audience could go back to it later. In speaking, however, you don't have a second chance to make your point understood.

Always begin a seminar with an 'attention step.' Here are several methods for getting started:

1. Pose a question--ask about a subject that arouses your audience's interest or ask a question that your seminar will answer.
2. Recite a pertinent quotation or a bit of poetry.
3. Make a "shocker" statement. This could include an unusual statistic or a startling fact picked up in your research.
4. Tell a story or relate an historical event.
5. Gossip with your audience ("I just talked to so and so and he said, ...").
6. Tell a joke (no inside or obscene jokes).
7. Even total silence, of an appropriate length, can be effective.

Be sure the attention you get is positive. Avoid the alienation of any group--religious, regional, political, employment, age, sex, etc.... In addition, try to identify with your listeners. Compliment them or say something personal such as "in Dr. Smith's class we...." How you choose to open your seminar is up to you. However, never start your seminar with an excuse: "I didn't have time to prepare"; "You'll have to excuse me, I'm not a good public speaker", or "As you can see, I'm a bit nervous." You'll just turn off your audience, insult them, and belittle your message. It's easy to convince others of your defects if you try, but that's really not what you want to do.

The Preview

After your opening remarks, give a quick preview or outline of what's to come. Your listeners can't glance at a table of contents or skim through the material like they can with a written report. A preview will let them know what you're going to talk about and what they can expect to learn from your seminar. In the preview of your seminar you want to state your specific purpose and/or perhaps offer clarification of your purpose. Essentially, in the preview, you should try to answer the following:

1. What general research problems are associated with the topic or what general goals do researchers in this area wish to accomplish or approach?
2. What makes these problems or studies of interest (i.e., what information would be obtained by solving these problems by studies connected with this topic)?
3. Give a general survey of what types of studies are being done and what general goals they are designed to achieve.
The Body

The body of the seminar contains the specific studies or methods which are of central interest to the seminar. In this part of the seminar the speaker should attempt to:

1. Introduce in a general way what problems, studies or methods of study will be the main theme of the seminar and how they contribute to accomplishing general goals.

2. Describe experimental or theoretical studies in sufficient detail so that the audience clearly understands what was done and what kind of results were obtained. This does not imply a need for detailed descriptions of experiments and apparatus (unless a new technique is being described) or minute details of mathematical derivations. Such details will lower the quality of the seminar. The speaker should, however, be prepared to answer questions on such details.

3. Analyze critically the meaning of the results, and give conclusions which may be obtained from them. The analysis of conclusions may be that of other workers and scientists. However, the seminar speaker is evaluated on how well he or she understands any interpretations he or she presents. If any conclusions or interpretations of other workers deserves criticism the seminar speaker should be prepared to do this.

Essentially in the body of the seminar you want to state your case and prove it. Supportive material is the meat and muscle on the skeleton outline. The purpose of supportive material is to illustrate and explain the conclusion. Types of supporting material are charts and graphs, photographs, samples, demonstrations, stories, analogies and comparisons, and quotes from authorities. Complex statistical data should be distilled to simple and salient conclusions.

The decision about what background material needs to be presented is a delicate one. One thought to keep in mind is that in researching the topic you have become very familiar with the subject. Thus it is quite possible to assume mistakenly that the audience is equally familiar with it. When in doubt about background, present it.

When you get to the meat of your talk--the main points themselves--take it easy. Listeners cannot take in as much information as readers. Few people can remember something they hear only once. So be clear and limit the number of main points. Repeat important thoughts and summarize as you go along. Additionally, make explicit transitions; for example, say, "the second area of discussion is..." or "my third main point is...."
Practically every presentation should have some element of persuasion in it. Even in informational seminars, you are trying to get the audience to agree with you or act in some way. People are persuaded by a series of logical and emotional appeals.

**Logical Appeals**

There are several different types of logical appeal:

1. **Evidence**--Give the facts in a logical and compelling way. However, any erroneous material will destroy your credibility. So will questions left unanswered.

2. **Deduction**--Deriving the specific from the general. In order to be effective the generalization must be accepted by the audience.

3. **Induction**--Deriving the general from the specific.

4. **Analogy**--Assume two things are alike.

5. **Authority**--The use of testimony or opinions of experts.

6. **Causal**--Assumes cause-and-effect. The reasoning sequence may move from cause to effect or effect to cause.

7. **Problem-solving**--State a problem, analyze it, look at possible alternatives, and then suggest the best alternative.

8. **Two-sided view**--Look at two sides of an issue. Show strengths and weaknesses of both.

People expect the use of logical appeals in situations they identify as efforts to influence their opinion, for instance, sales, politics, religion, or a trial. People appreciate having their intelligence taken into account. However, people vary. While some are persuaded by logic and nothing else others want facts that they can weigh themselves. Remember that evidence and documentation are far more persuasive than repeated unsupported assertions.

The logic of an argument does not have to be overt. It may be subtle. And, of course, logical appeals may be blended with emotional appeals.

**Emotional (or motivational) Appeals**

Altruism, anger, avarice, greed, guilt, love, patriotism, security--all can be used to make an emotional appeal. They may be used either positively or negatively. Almost every presentation should have an emotional impact. Emotions stimulate thinking and make your audience feel. To be relevant, a presentation must be delivered to a want, a need, or a perceived want or need. Additionally, the appeal should be appropriate to the issue.
The Conclusion

After you've explored each of your main points, don't make the fatal mistake of many novice speaker and close abruptly out of relief that you made it through. "Well, I guess that's all I have to say" may be a popular ending but it's a very poor one. Your last words are the ones the audience will recall best, so make them count.

When presenting your conclusion; be clear and concise, state the problem and state the desired solution. Any talk ought to begin strongly, and likewise, it should end the same way. One of the many nice things about a Beethoven symphony is that one can tell when it is over. The formal part of a seminar should have the same quality. Usually it is a good idea to summarize the salient points of the talk and review the conclusions in several brief sentences. It is also a good idea to let the audience know what you're doing by saying "in conclusion" or "in summary."

To close you can also:

1. List your main points again.
2. Refer to your opening story.
3. Briefly summarize to what extent studies presented in the seminar have contributed to the specific goals they were designed to reach.
4. Indicate what questions remain unanswered and suggest directions for future research.
5. Close with a challenge, a question, a choice, or an anecdote.

You can make it clear that you are finished by thanking the audience for its attention or saying that you will be happy to entertain questions.

At the end of the question-and-answer session be sure to make a final closing statement.
Script vs. Outline

The two schools of thought on how you should prepare your seminar each have devoted advocates. The first way, which involves writing every word of the entire seminar and speaking from a complete script, is the method most often chosen by nervous speakers. It lends itself to formal situations and times when an exact transcript may be needed. The second method is to prepare a detailed outline. If novices use this method, they should still write out the entire seminar, but then reduce it to outline form and transfer the outline to cue cards. Working from an outline prevents you from simply reading your script and should lend a naturalness to your seminar.

Whichever method you choose, you should speak as naturally as possible. Do not memorize the seminar or you’ll end up sounding stilted. You may want to memorize your opening and conclusion, however, to help you maintain eye contact with your audience.

Incidentally, here is a small device which may prove helpful. There is a moment just after you are introduced when you first look at the audience and realizes that they expect you to say something. It is quite possible at this time that you may forget how you meant to begin. Although memorization of a talk is a mistake, memorization of the first sentence is a very good idea. If that first thought is clearly in mind as you walk to the front of the room you can begin positively and with confidence.

If you decide to use cue cards, 5" x 7" index cards are the easiest to hold. You can rearrange your material, if necessary, and keep the cards in order in a small ring binder. Print on your cards with a black felt-tip pen, leave wide margins, and put just a few lines on each card.

Many effective speakers use a combination of methods. They often write out the entire script, and then transfer key words and important points to a set of note cards. They rehearse with the cards and refer back to the script if they need to expand or revise their notes. This combination of methods seems to offer the best of both worlds. With it you develop a complete, polished script and are well prepared and well organized. When you actually speak, however, you refer only to your notes. If you carefully rehearse with these notes, you can deliver a natural-sounding seminar, maintain eye contact with your audience, and still cover all your material in a logical sequence.

No matter which method or combination of methods is chosen, the use of "oral" English is important. Speak using short words, active verbs, simple sentences, and terms the audience can readily understand. Avoid jargon, highly specialized vocabulary, and unfamiliar abbreviations. An informal, first person, conversational style is usually the most effective.

Be sure to number the sheets of your text or note cards and do not use clips or staples, so that each page lies flat for easy turning. Also number all slides or transparencies (in the bottom left corner as they face you) and place them in the proper order. Nothing makes a talk appear more disorganized than fumbling with note cards or visuals.

The kind of notes that you use and how much you depend on them during your talk is a matter of personal preference. If notes are going to be used they should be clear enough to be read at a distance and easy to keep straight. The more independent one can become is usually a reflection of how many times the seminar has been rehearsed. The lack of any notes is usually impressive. A lecturer who decides to eschew notes must be sure to commit to memory only the outline of the seminar and not a verbatim text.
Visual Aids

A good seminar successfully combines words and illustrations to tell a complete story. It has long been known that supplementing your seminar with visual aids is a proven method of increasing listener comprehension and retention. But remember, visual aids should only be used to supplement. They should clarify and amplify the spoken word, not duplicate or replace it. They cannot make up for a poorly written presentation. And they shouldn't be used as a crutch. Did you ever sit through a seminar where practically every spoken word was projected on a slide? Why have a speaker at all?

Properly used audiovisuals sustain your audience's interest and attention. They can be used to clarify confusing or technical explanations, emphasize important points, and demonstrate instructions. Visual aids build a professional appearance and help you cover all your material in a limited time. They can also build confidence in a shaky speaker because they divert some of the audience's attention. Additionally, the visuals themselves serve as a guide or an outline for you to follow.

A graph is much more effective at presenting information than simply listing a series of numbers. Remember a picture is worth a thousand words.

The choice of visuals for your seminar is mostly a matter of personal choice. However, a professional multimedia presentation or expensive video tape program may not be worth the time or expense required to prepare it. As a result, you are basically left with three choices for the visuals for your seminar:

1. the blackboard.
2. overhead transparencies.
3. slides.

To help you decide which type of visuals to use for your seminar, refer to the Visual Aids Guide (Form 3 in the Appendix), which gives the advantages, disadvantages, and tips for using each medium.

Acetate sheets for write-on transparencies are available from the chemistry secretary for approximately 10¢ each. Transparency marking pens may be purchased in the bookstore or borrowed from the chemistry secretary. Unless your handwriting is extremely neat, write-on transparencies do not look very professional.

Thermofax transparencies are available from the chemistry secretary for approximately 20¢ each. The seminar coordinator or the chemistry secretary will explain the production of thermofax overheads.

Since the majority of students use transparencies for the visual aids for their seminars, the chemistry department will provide ten write-on or thermofax transparencies at no charge. Additional transparencies may purchased from the chemistry secretary.

Slides are the most professional looking medium. However, they are also more expensive (approximately 50¢ each) than overheads and more difficult to produce as well. If you have less than five slides it usually takes 2 to 3 working days for them to be made. If you have more than ten slides, plan on at least a week. If you still desire to use slides for your seminar, the seminar coordinator can describe the steps involved in their production.

Inadequate visual aids are all too frequent. Some of the common pitfalls are:

1. **Illegibility.** Legibility in one size does not mean legibility in another. The legibility of a projected visual is determined by the letter or line size, density (or opacity) and contrast of tone of the artwork. It should be remembered that only the speaker has control of these factors.

2. **Overcrowding.** Try not to crowd too much material onto one slide. Irrelevant data should be eliminated.

3. **Confusion.** This stems from failure to arrange legends for quick comprehension of graphic or tabular data.

4. **Wrong medium.** Don't use tabular data, for instance, when a simple graph will do.
No matter what medium you choose, poorly prepared or improperly handled visuals will detract from your presentation. So keep in mind these basic pointers to assure that your combined oral and visual presentation has maximum impact:

1. Everyone in the audience must be able to see as well as hear the presentation. The size of your audience and the configuration of the room have a bearing on your use of visuals.

2. The equipment you need must be available, affordable, and appropriate to your audience. A too-simple presentation is usually better than one that's too complicated or that comes off as too "slick."

3. Your visuals must be easy to read and understand. Crowding too much material on one visual is the most common mistake speakers make when they first use visual aids. A slide should have only a few lines—preferably only a few words—of type.

4. Be sure your visuals work with the presentation. Material should not be projected before it is discussed or left visible after that topic is finished. Don't write on the blackboard until you have to and keep your charts covered until you're ready for them.

5. If handouts are part of you seminar, wait until you have finished speaking before distributing them or your audience will read your handouts while you talk.

6. Have extra projector bulbs, chalk, clean erasers, felt-tip markers, extension cords—anything you may need—close at hand.

7. Look at your audience as much as possible. Don't stare at your visual—using a pointer may help.

8. Be consistent from one visual to the next. Good visuals require standardization—the same graphic style, colors, and typeface should unify all your visuals.

9. Tables of data should be clearly labeled and the trends easily distinguished. Extensive tables of numbers, however, are always confusing. One should extract and present only the important numbers. It is necessary only to show several examples and say that the trend continues over a hundred compounds. One does not need to show every one.

10. The ordinate and abscissa of every graph should be clearly labeled (including units).
Types of Illustrations

1. Line graphs to show trends. (Figure 1)
2. Bar graphs to compare magnitudes. (Figure 2)
3. Pie graphs for relative portions of a whole. (Figure 3)
4. Chemical structures, reactions, and mathematical expressions tend to lead to overcrowding; use more slides with less on each. (Figure 4)
5. Schematic drawings and simplified pictorials should be shown with only the required part(s) and detail. (Figure 5)
6. Tables should be simplified to omit extraneous details. (Figure 6)
7. Topic sentence(s), for orientation and transition, should be a simple sentence for each point, one to a slide. (Figure 7)
Getting Ready

At least one week before the scheduled date for your seminar, go over the presentation arrangements with the seminar coordinator. Also at this time, deliver to the seminar coordinator a typed 'final copy' of your abstract and seminar announcement [see sample seminar announcement (Form 4 in the Appendix)]. Notify the seminar coordinator to arrange for delivery of a slide projector if you will need one for the seminar.

Be sure to check out the room where you will speaking. Check the operation of the lights and be sure someone is available to turn the slide projector on and off if you're using slides. The seminar room has a chalkboard, overhead projector, and pull down screen, as well as a lecture desk or podium.

Practice setting up any audiovisual equipment you will be needing. Take the time to run through your audiovisuals and be sure everyone in the room will be able to see and hear everything.

REHEARSE YOUR VISUALS AND BE SURE THEY ARE VISIBLE FROM EVERY SEAT.

A key to success in any endeavor is practice. Just as no one becomes a star quarterback overnight, you can't expect your first seminar to be perfect. But the more often you give seminars, the better you'll get. And the more you practice each seminar, the more professional your delivery will be. It is a good idea to practice your seminar in the same room you will be giving it for real so you can begin to feel comfortable moving about the room. However, practice doesn’t mean memorizing your seminar. It means becoming so familiar with your message that natural wording flows easily. Practice brings confidence and poise.

Rehearse your entire seminar each time you practice it. Don't keep starting over when you make a mistake. You might never get around to rehearsing the end that way, and you certainly won't be able to start over when you actually give the seminar. Rehearse out loud, preferably into a tape recorder. Even better, practice your seminar on videotape if you can. If your presentation incorporates visual aids, use them when you rehearse so that you're sure they fit your talk and you can handle them with ease. As you practice you'll hear any flaws and stilted expressions. Even try a session in front of a mirror so you can give a critical eye to your "body language."

Before the big day, practice your seminar as a 'full dress rehearsal' in front of an associate (one who will criticize you honestly) and ask him or her to complete the Effective Speaking Checklist (Form 5 in the Appendix) to evaluate your presentation. Even practice approaching the podium.

It is always a good idea to have a 'spare bulb' for the slide projector or overhead projector. Most likely you won't need it, but the peace of mind you receive simply knowing that you have it is enormous!

Here are some points to remember when making your mental preparation. Know your presentation, but don't memorize it. Don't be tied to your notes either. Condense you presentation to a series of ideas, each represented by one or two key words. Think through the talk a number of times. Try to anticipate the audience response to each item of it. Plan audience involvement. Focus your mind on the audience, not yourself. Feel with them. Ask yourself why do they need to hear what you have to say?

Similarly, there are points to note in making your physical preparation. Be rested and alert. Don't use drugs of any kind. Watch out for coffee, sweets, and alcohol. They may let you down just when you need to be up. Don't eat heavily before a presentation. You want blood flowing to your brain, not your stomach. Do warming-up exercises so you will be relaxed and energetic.

When making your emotional preparation, keep the following in mind. Try to get "psyched" up. Be on a higher emotional plane than your audience. Bring them to where you are and go together to still-higher levels. Harness the emotional energy that is stimulated in you by stage fright. If you feel that you lack talent, remember that preparation can make up for it.
Abstract

A typed abstract is to be submitted to the seminar coordinator one week prior to the seminar for approval. Once the abstract is approved, a sufficient number of copies for distribution to all faculty members as well as additional copies for students attending the seminar will then be made.

The seminar abstract should:

1. Be approximately 200 words in length.
2. Contain recent references pertinent to the seminar.
3. Clearly state the problems or studies of central interest to the seminar.
4. Indicate why the topic is of interest to research chemists.
5. Indicate what methods of study and types of results will be discussed.
6. Say what bearing the results have on the studies or problems posed.

Seminar Announcement

After approval of the abstract by the seminar coordinator, the student is responsible for arranging with the chemistry department secretary that a seminar announcement similar to the one attached (Form 4 in the Appendix) be made--this is most easily done by simply modifying the attached announcement by inserting the relevant information. The announcement will be produced, duplicated and distributed by the chemistry secretary.

Introduction

At the beginning of your seminar, the seminar coordinator will introduce you to the audience. Write your own introduction. The purpose of an introduction is to establish rapport and credibility, get attention and stimulate interest. It is usually appropriate to include pertinent information about yourself which may include: your hometown, major, minor, specific interests or hobbies, career goal, etc...

If possible, try to give the seminar coordinator the introduction the day before the seminar and go over it with the seminar coordinator.

NOTE: It is also wise to bring an extra copy of the introduction with you the day of the seminar because seminar coordinators have from time to time been known to ‘temporarily’ misplace things.
That Day

On the day of the seminar, arrive early. Give yourself plenty of time to check on all the final arrangements.

1. Set up your projector, screen, charts, or whatever props you'll need. Be sure to bring extra bulbs, chalk, erasers, transparency marking pens, extension cords, and so on as needed.

2. Clean--do not erase--the blackboard with a wet sponge.

3. The seminar coordinator will provide a pointer if desired or a less professional but adequate meter stick may be used.

4. Don't worry about the refreshments! They are not your responsibility.

In the final minutes before you speak, remember that you are 'on display' even when you're not actually speaking, so watch your posture, gestures, and conversation. Look pleasantly confident, and show your willingness to share new information. When it's time to speak, keep in mind that it's not only your words that do the talking, but also your body. Walk confidently to the podium, stand up straight, look directly at your audience, and smile. You'll appear self-assured, even if you're shaking inside.

A well researched and organized seminar is not a good seminar if it is presented in a boring manner. Think theater. Try to entertain as well as inform. Likewise, why should an audience listen to someone who slouches, looks down, and fidgets? Such an appearance spells nervousness. And the audience will question your expertise. If you feel strongly about your subject, show it! Enthusiasm is catching--so is lethargy. Put some life into your words. Act confidently and as if you're enjoying yourself. You'll convince your audience--and probably yourself!
Question-and-Answer Session

Your seminar is not over until you’ve fielded questions from the audience. However, don't panic—you can prepare for the question-and-answer session so that it goes smoothly. Since you’ve already researched your topic thoroughly, you’re ready to handle most questions. Many experienced speakers try to anticipate the most likely questions and prepare suitable responses. They jot down important statistics, dates, and other specific information they may need to back up their answers.

When it comes to answering questions, be polite. Listen carefully and respectively to the questioner—inaudition leads to confusion. Don’t interrupt the questioner, unless he or she goes off on a lengthy tangent. You may find it necessary to repeat the question in your own words—this is certainly true if you are not sure if the audience heard the question but it may also be useful if you need to have some time to think about the question and your answer. Don’t blurt out nonsense. Disrespect, flippancy, arrogance, etc... directed at the questioner often results in an antagonistic questioner who will do his or her best to make you look silly. When answering questions, avoid half answers. These again bring out the antagonistic questioner.

Remember, it is possible to cover a subject so well that questions are impossible. If there is a danger of this happening, you can leave some obvious gaps so that someone will fall into the trap and ask a question for which you are eminently prepared. This 'trick,' however, should not be attempted by novice speakers. Most likely, members of the audience will find plenty of 'gaps' in your presentation on their own.

What should you do about difficult or antagonistic questions? Don't let yourself be put on the defensive by people who like to argue. One way of responding is to rephrase the question in your own words. Besides buying time, this lets you reshape the question into one you would prefer answering. Other tactics include answering "Yes, but..." when you agree with some minor aspect of the question, but then go on to refute the questioner's position. Or, if the questioner is challenging you, you can answer with a question. If the questioner persists, don't get into an argument. Suggest getting together later with the questioner to hash over their ideas—this advice also goes for questions that aren't on the subject.

Prepare in advance a procedure for dealing with questions you can't answer. Usually, the best policy is to admit immediately that you don't know—though perhaps you should! In order to avoid particularly embarrassing "I don't knows," you absolutely must not introduce concepts that you do not understand. If you are is going to mumble something about the isokinetic relationship, you had better know what it is and what it means. The possibility of sounding erudite is not worth the risk of being 'nailed.'

If possible, spread questions around the room, limiting each person to one or two questions. This keeps anyone in the audience from dominating your presentation. But what should you do if you open the floor to questions and none are forthcoming? Try posing a few questions yourself, and then answer them. However do not borrow a tactic used by some speakers and 'plant' a few questions in the audience ahead of time. Although in this way you're sure of being asked questions and they'll be the questions you're prepared to answer, it is considered somewhat a 'dishonorable deed.'

Remember that it's your seminar. You're in charge. You can limit questions from a hostile questioner. You can interrupt a question that's turning into a speech, and you can refuse to answer unrelated questions. The best way of dealing with the question-and-answer period is to be thoroughly familiar with and have thought deeply about your chosen topic. Remember that a well prepared and well delivered seminar can be ruined by a poor performance during the question-and-answer period. Look on this time as an opportunity to show off your skills at speaking without a script. You can do it well if you've done all your homework.
Seminar Evaluation

Grading

Using the Seminar Evaluation Sheet (Form 6 in the Appendix), student seminars are evaluated by both students and faculty alike; however, only faculty evaluations are used in determining the grade for the seminar. Using the faculty evaluations as a guide, the seminar coordinator assigns a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F for the seminar.

NOTE: Grades will not be assigned until the end of the quarter.

Attendance

Students must attend all student seminars presented during the quarter which he/she is enrolled in CHEM 490. Attendance at seminars is monitored by submission of signed seminar evaluations. For each unexcused absence the seminar grade will be lowered by one letter grade.

During the week immediately following the seminar, the student is expected to meet with the seminar coordinator to discuss the seminar and go over the seminar evaluation sheets from the students and faculty. The purpose of this review is to discuss how improvements might be made on future seminars.

Conclusion

Public speaking provides you with an opportunity to put your management skills to work. The same rules apply to managing a seminar as managing a department; you plan, organize, direct and control. Plan what you are going to say, why you're saying it, and to whom you're speaking. Organize you material. Direct your audience, aiming for a specific reaction from them. And control your delivery and the physical arrangements for your presentation. Giving a good seminar can do a lot to improve the opinion faculty and students have of you as a student.

After taking the time to read this guide you probably deserve some kind of reward. The reward you receive is that in knowing the skills and techniques in the Guide to Presenting Seminars you are better prepared than 99 percent of the speakers out there now! Practice them a few times and you'll have an even greater edge.

A list of Tips For Better Seminars (Form 7) is contained in the Appendix. It is a list of twenty-six tips for you to consider in preparing your seminar. Most people admit that how you say something is as important as what you say. These tips try to let your seminar speak for itself with distracting from it.

There are two things that will assure your success in giving a talk--careful preparation and proper delivery. The preparation involves finding out who, what, where, when, and how--a total understanding of what needs to be done--and then writing your material to fit the need. Delivering a talk is an art that can be practiced, if you know how. It requires your mental, physical, and emotional preparation.

You're now ready to meet the challenge. You can give a seminar--and do it well!
APPENDICES
Form 1

SEMINAR PLANNING OUTLINE

INSTRUCTIONS: Before preparing a seminar, read through this outline for an overview of all the steps involved. Then indicate a target date for each step. Check off each step as you complete it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Check When Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule a date for the seminar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select a seminar topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learn all you can about your topic.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulate your objective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organize your notes in a logical sequence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start writing a rough draft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set your manuscript aside for a few days.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check for organization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edit for grammar and style.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the Editorial Checklist (Form 2).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an interesting opening.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be sure you have an effective close.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer key ideas from your script to note cards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the Visual Aids Guide (Form 3).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the presentation arrangements with the seminar coordinator.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare the seminar abstract.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare the Seminar Announcement (Form 4).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare your introduction.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice some more (in front of a mirror, or on videotape).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final dress rehearsal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask an associate to complete the Effective Speaking Checklist (Form 5).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make a list of items to bring with you to the seminar.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice appropriate body language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare for the question-and-answer session.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have answers to probable questions ready.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve your impromptu speaking skills by thinking ahead and practicing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Tips For Better Seminars (Form 7).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## EDITORIAL CHECKLIST

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Review your manuscript against this checklist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check If Improvement Needed</th>
<th>Check When Improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are most of your sentences short and simple?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are your verb tenses consistent?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use the active voice?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you avoid clichés and slang?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Will all your technical expressions be understood by your audience?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you make smooth transitions from one section to the next?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use specific examples?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you include persuasive data where appropriate?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your presentation show some creativity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have an attention-getting opening?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you repeat important points?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you summarize before you close?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VISUAL AIDS GUIDE

INSTRUCTIONS: Use this list of the typical visual aids used in seminars along with the advantages, disadvantages, and tips for using each to decide the appropriate format for the visuals for your seminar.

1. Blackboard

   **Advantages**
   
   Versatile. Good for an informal message, small group, or audience involvement. Room can stay lit.

   **Disadvantages**
   
   Have to turn back to audience to write. Have to stop and erase. Cannot easily be seen in large room (May not be very legible—especially if your handwriting is not very neat).

   **Tips**
   
   Stand to one side so the audience can see and you can maintain eye contact. Use heavy lines and colored chalk for ease in reading. Prepare all diagrams ahead of time so you can copy them quickly and neatly. Erase ideas when finished. Practice writing legibly on board.

2. Overhead Transparencies

   **Advantages**
   
   Easy to use. Prepared ahead of time, but flexible (you can eliminate some or change order). You can face the audience. Room stays lit. Machine is up front with speaker. Little chance of mechanical failure.

   **Disadvantages**
   
   Projector may block view. Projector may be noisy.

   **Tips**
   
   Watch that machinery doesn’t block view. Focus. Practice using machine.

3. Slides

   **Advantages**
   
   Prepared ahead of time. Projectors are portable, small, and unobtrusive. Easy to use. Professional look. Frequent slide changes can speed your presentation.

   **Disadvantages**
   
   Expensive if professionally prepared. It may take up to a week to have slides prepared. Room must be darkened. Projector may be noisy. Slides cannot be easily rearranged once the seminar begins. It may be necessary to have someone change slides for your.

   **Tips**
   
   You can take your own 35 mm slides, but in most cases professionally prepared slides are preferable.

**NOTE:** For both slides and transparencies, it is best to put as little as possible on each slide and build up your points, one on each successive slide.
CHEMISTRY SEMINAR

WHO: Ann Tiefenthaler

WHAT: Presentation on "Optimization of Dispersion Parameters in Magnetic Recording"

WHEN: Thursday, October 31, 1985
4:00 p.m.

WHERE: MS-119

Coffee and cookies will be available
Form 5

EFFECTIVE SPEAKING CHECKLIST

INSTRUCTIONS: As you listen to the speaker, take note of the following points and use them as a guide to evaluate his or her presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Characteristics</th>
<th>Needs Some Improvement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy to follow.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audible.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks slowly enough to be understood.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-paced.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varies tone of voice.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaks with expression.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relaxed stance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate dress.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recovers well from mistakes.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintains eye contact.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smiles when appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows warmth and enthusiasm.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds natural.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks around room.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walks to and from podium with assurance and good posture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Characteristics</th>
<th>Needs Some Improvement</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slouches.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recites as if text were memorized.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive reading of text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds stilted.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses lots of &quot;ums&quot; or &quot;ahs.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mispronounces words.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds nasal or whiny.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks too fast or too slowly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check off those nervous gestures the speaker uses frequently:

- Fidgets
- Scratches
- Laughs nervously
- Bites lip
- Paces back and forth
- Tosses hair
- Tugs ear
- Taps feet
- Drums fingers
- Twists hair or ring
- Plays with glasses, pencil, etc.
- Clenches fists

Other comments:
SEMINARY EVALUATION SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: This is a copy of the seminar evaluation sheet.
TIPS FOR BETTER SEMINARS

INSTRUCTIONS: Use this list of tips for improving your seminar.

1. Look for speaking opportunities. The best way to get better is to practice.
2. Speak with assurance. Impress the audience with your knowledge.
3. Look alive. Emotions are contagious (this is true of boredom as well as excitement).
4. Use simple words and short sentences.
5. Focus your seminar on "you," not "I."
6. Your listeners should be familiar with all the terms you use.
7. Be going somewhere. Share with your audience where you are going and why it is important to get there. Throughout your presentation, point out where you are, where you have been, and where you are going. Give the audience a sense of progress. Movement is an attention-keeper.
8. Be specific. Avoid generalities. Talk about specific people, places and events. Use graphic analogies and comparisons.
9. Be current. Use material that is of current interest. Quote recent and good sources.
10. Be graphic. If you are talking about fire, light a match. Put material into your audience's hands. Let them touch, taste and smell it.
11. Move. Don't get trapped behind a podium or table, if possible. Get off the 'stage' and move into the audience.
12. Use the audience as an authority. How many of you have had experience with ...? As you all know .... Jack can testify to .... Peter, you've been working on the project and ....
14. Be careful with humor. Too much and your point will be lost in the laughter.
15. Don't tell off-color or ethnic jokes. Don't ridicule your audience.
16. Watch your pronunciation. Mispronounced words are distracting and reflect on your expertise.
17. Rehearse with any props or visuals you'll be using.
18. Rehearse in front of a mirror or a "live" audience.
19. Practice in the clothes you plan to wear so you're sure they'll be comfortable.
20. Do not wear distracting jewelry or loud clothing.
21. Make a list of items you want to take with you: notes, visuals, watch, projector bulbs, handkerchief, glasses, etc.
22. Practice "asides" from your script. Make them seem impromptu, even though you practice them ahead of time.
23. Leave the podium briskly and confidently. Don't show your relief that it's over!
24. If something goes wrong, don't panic. And don't apologize. Simply tell your audience what's wrong if it will take a minute to correct. Make the correction and go on about your business.

25. Be prepared for the unpredictable!

26. Relax and smile. You will be good because you are prepared!
REFERENCES


