**Presenting Effectively**

When you start your presentation, the audience will be interested in what you say. Use these tips to help keep them interested throughout your presentation:

* *Be excited.* You are talking about something exciting. If you remember to be excited, your audience will feel it and automatically become more interested.
* *Speak with confidence.*When you are speaking, you are the authority on your topic, but do not pretend that you know everything. If you do not know the answer to a question, admit it. Consider deferring the question to your mentor or offer to look into the matter further.
* *Make eye contact with the audience.* Your purpose is to communicate with your audience, and people listen more if they feel you are talking directly to them. As you speak, let your eyes settle on one person for several seconds before moving on to somebody else. You do not have to make eye contact with everybody, but make sure you connect with all areas of the audience equally.
* *Avoid reading from the paper or the screen.*First, if you are reading from the screen, you are not making eye contact with your audience. Second, if you put it on your slide, it is because you wanted them to read it, not you.
* *Blank the screen when a slide is unnecessary.*A slide that is not related to what you are speaking about can distract the audience. Pressing the letter B or the period key displays a black screen, which lets the audience concentrate solely on your words. Press the same key to restore the display.
* *Use a pointer only when necessary.*If you are using a laser pointer, remember to keep it off unless you need to highlight something on the screen.
* *Pause.*Pauses bring audible structure to your presentation. They emphasize important information, make transitions obvious, and give the audience time to catch up between points and to read new slides. Pauses always feel much longer to speakers than to listeners. Practice counting silently to three (slowly) between points.
* *Avoid filler words.*Um, like, you know, and many others. To an audience, these are indications that you do not know what to say; you sound uncomfortable, so they start to feel uncomfortable as well. Speak slowly enough that you can collect your thoughts before moving ahead. If you really do not know what to say, pause silently until you do.
* *Relax. I*t is hard to relax when you are nervous, but your audience will be much more comfortable if you are too.
* *Breathe.* It is fine to be nervous. In fact, you should be all good presenters are nervous every time they are in front of an audience. The most effective way to keep your nerves in check aside from a lot of practice before hand is to remember to breathe deeply throughout your presentation.